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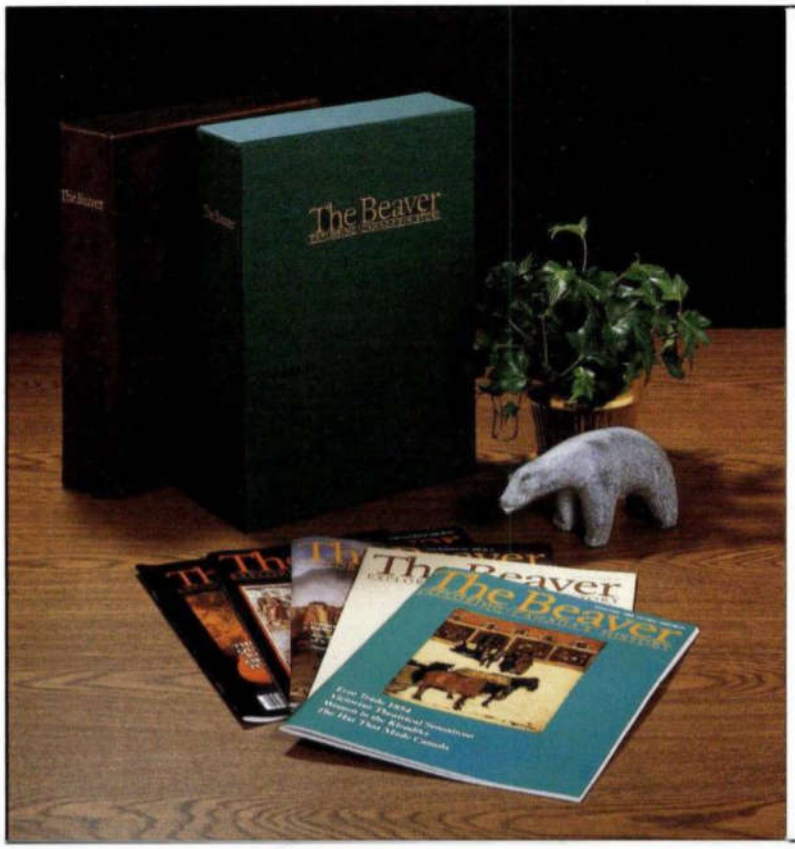

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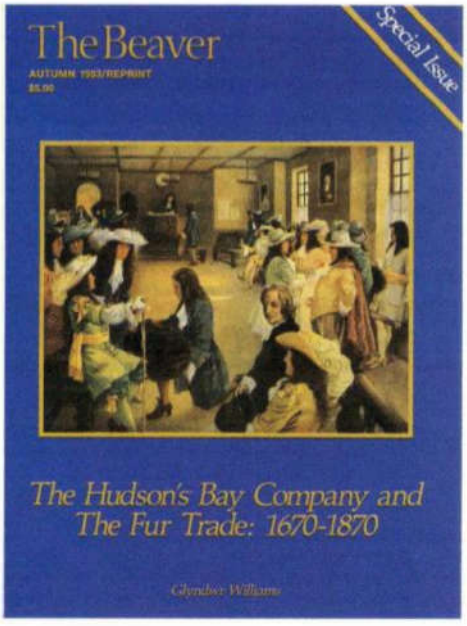

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By GLYNDWR WILLIAMS

86 pages. Illustrated

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Blackfoot girl with cat, Macleod, 1880s. (Glenbow Archives/ Anderton Collection).

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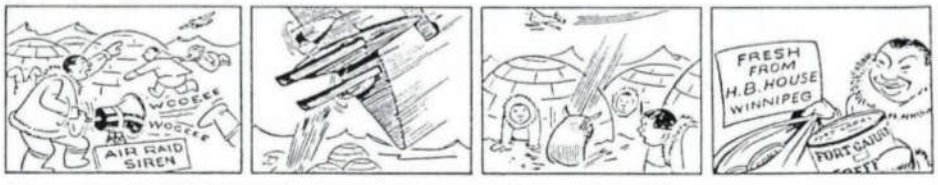


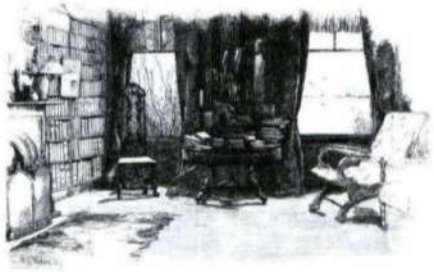
"Wings over the North". Cartoon by James Simpkins, "The Beaver" June 1940.

History and the 'Common Reader'

". . . I rejoice to concur with the common reader; for by the common sense of readers, uncorrupted by literary prejudices, after all the refinements of subtlety and the dogmatism of learning, must be finally decided all claims to poetical honours."

— **Dr. Samuel Johnson,** *The Life of Gray.*

The novelist and essayist Virginia Woolf expanded on Dr. Johnson's views in the preface to a famous collection of her writings: "The common reader, as Dr. Johnson implies, differs from the critic and the scholar. He is worse educated and nature has not gifted him so generously. He reads for his own pleasure rather than to impart knowledge or correct the opinions of others. Above all, he is guided by an instinct to create for himself, out of whatever odds and ends he can come by, some kind of whole — a portrait of a man, a sketch of an age, a theory of the art of writing."



We live in the age of the "expert" and of what might be called "the academic closed shop" and yet there is a large and growing body of men and women who are not academics or experts but who are, nevertheless, interested in many of the things that interest scholars and, while they may never attain "expert" status, hold an honourable position as members of the great tribe of "common readers".

History has attracted a large following of non-academic enthusiasts and while many "amateurs" in the field attain a formidable level of knowledge and understanding of their chosen branch of the subject, most read history for pleasure and for the perspective it gives them on human life and activity. This desire for enjoyment and a measure of general knowledge must not be despised and it should be remembered that from the days of Herodotus to the present written history has been regarded as a branch of literature, the best of which can be read for enjoyment as well as instruction. John Aubrey's *Brief Lives* or Sir Thomas Browne's *Urn Burial* may not conform to modern standards of scholarship, yet they are highly valued as literature and, while their contents may be challenged as to their historical accuracy, they cast a brilliant light on the attitudes and beliefs of the times in which they were written. They evoke aspects of a lost age.

The concept of the "popular historian" is one of long standing. The writer of popular history or history for the general reader, in fact, has been on the scene as long as there have been educated men and women to read what has been written. Suetonius, Mallory, Holinshed, Gibbon, Froude, Macaulay and Parkman are but a few of the many who have pleased the common reader over the centuries.

An earlier generation of educated readers often went directly to the major historians for their history and many historians published serious works that hoped to find a readership beyond the universities. Historians such as Lewis Namier and G.M. Young may have been engaged in a dry-as-dust and detailed examination of voting patterns and power groupings in eighteenth-century parliaments or nineteenth-century social organization, but they found time to produce essays and books for the wider public based on their studies.

In the modern era of extreme specialization in historical research and the constantly expanding areas of study, the present-day historian often publishes only for a limited and highly-educated audience of readers. The resulting book or paper may be fascinating and even exciting to the specialist and expert, but to others it might just as well be written in cipher. Publication for the eyes and minds of other experts is often seen as an end in itself.

Raw or refined research and the technical evaluation of data may be of little or no interest to the common reader, but this seemingly obscure and esoteric material may, when interpreted and placed in context, prove to be of great interest to the non-expert.

When an historian is disinclined, too busy or unable to make his or her researches available to the broader

audience there is a role for the writer of popular history, the history-writer gifted with exceptional literary talent.

Christoper Moore, in his recent essay on Queen's historian Joy Parr (*The Beaver*, June/July 1991) warns that Parr's award-winning study, *The Gender of Breadwinners*, is aimed directly at a specialized academic audience and likely to confuse the ordinary reader. He makes a similar point in his essay in this issue (page 60) in which he quotes one of the authors of the recently published *Maritime Capital*, a study of the decline of East Coast shipping in the nineteenth century, to the effect that a popular version might be needed to get the story to the general reader.

Both *The Gender of Breadwinners* — which deals with the working lives of men and women in small Ontario industrial towns — and *Maritime Capital* contain material that, if sympathetically presented, might appeal greatly to the general reader, and yet both books, as written, seem likely to attract, at best, an audience of specialists.

It is tempting, of course, to suggest that bad writing and excessive use of jargon and computerese lie at the roots of the problem. In the view of some, anyone capable of crafting a phrase such as "problematize binary oppositions" needs a stern rebuke and an introduction to a teacher of "remedial English" at the freshman level. One can hardly imagine Gibbon writing of "correlation coefficients", but there you are. Gibbon was not a "baby-boomer". We live in interesting times.

Canada badly needs more historians who are willing and able to write well for a general audience. Interest in Canadian history has never been greater and it has never been more important to have an informed Canadian population. There is already a considerable audience of well-educated and interested readers. *The Beaver*, for example, has almost doubled its circulation in the last five years and the subscription figure, which now stands close to 40,000, could reach 50,000 or more in a few years.

We frequently hear the complaint that Canadian history is dull, lacking in heroic figures and probably not very important when compared to the history of other nations. One response to all this has been to adopt what might be called "the comic book" approach to Canadian history, injecting an element of "gee-whiz" enthusiasm into the telling and attempting to pump up various characters from Canadian history as rivals to Davy Crockett, Daniel Boone and other "superheroes" of American myth and legend.

History, however, is not a circus and reading history is not like a visit to Disneyland.

"We don't need to make our history interesting," Vincent Massey once observed, "It *is* interesting." We think Canada has no history worth mentioning because we have not taken the trouble to seek out the history of this remarkable land. The problem is not that we have no heroic figures, or that nothing happened or that everything that did happen was as dull as a debate on freight rates. Our problem has been that too few of our academics have been gifted writers and too few of our gifted writers have been historians. There are many exceptions, of course, and we all know who they are — and who they are not.

As for being less interesting than the history of other nations, Canadian history is now avidly studied in departments of Canadian Studies in universities around the world.

"History is not an academic mystery," W.L. Morton once wrote, "it's what the country thinks about itself, how it sorts out its ideas." It may well be that in spite of an apparent trend toward "insider" history and difficult studies, the growing demand for well-written, accurate and lively Canadian history will foster the continued growth of a large school of Canadian popular historians. A number of highly interesting figures have already emerged and more may be on the way. One of the tasks of *The Beaver* is to seek out and publish these writers for the enjoyment and benefit of the patient but discriminating "common reader".

— Christopher Dafoe

During the early 1920s most Canadians thought of airplanes as senseless machines for circus-like performers joy-riding from fairs and fields across the country. Slowly, it began to dawn on the business community that commercial possibilities for air transport really existed.

Newspapers such as the Edmonton *Bulletin* described Imperial Oil's aerial trail blazers George W. Gorman and Elmer Fullerton who flew two Junkers monoplanes down the Mackenzie River. Despite snowstorms, questionable ice conditions and no maps they made the first landing in the Northwest Territories on 24 March 1921. Only a year before, the Manitoba *Free Press* described the province's first air freight on 27 July 1920 and Toronto's *Mail and Empire* praised Canada's first air ambulance flight on 9 August.

Soon, Hudson's Bay Company employees at isolated posts began coming into contact with airplanes arriving from civilization, covering in a few hours what once needed weeks by canoe or dog team.

In August 1920 a singular event took place at Moose Factory. It was recorded in the Journal, and reprinted in *The Beaver* for January 1921:

> **August 17**: A large seaplane, the "Caaz", with Capt. Maxwell as pilot and Mr. Doan as engineer, landed here this afternoon. This is the first flying machine to come to Moose Factory and was quite a sight for our Indians.

On 14 January 1921, Secretary F.C. Ingrams from London's Hudson's Bay House noted that a "hydroplane" had travelled from Moose Factory to Cochrane, Ontario, in less than three hours. It had occurred to London officials that perhaps aeroplanes ". . . could be profitably used by the Company as a means of transport."

Aviation entrepreneurs on both sides of the Atlantic saw the HBC as a potential client to whom they could sell their services. In the summer of 1920 the Aircraft Manufacturing Company in Montreal became one of the first airlines to correspond with the Hudson's Bay Company.

This organization bravely claimed it could quote rates to carry mail ". . . to and from any part of North America at any season of the year" — a bold proposition considering few airmen at the time had experienced travel north of 60° latitude. The first flight by a Canadian airplane in the High Arctic did not take place until years later on 27 July 1927 during the Hudson Strait Expedition.

Soon after Imperial Oil gained first-hand experience in Arctic operations with their Junkers skiplanes, the oil company's vice-president suggested that the Hudson's Bay Company consider joint control with Imperial Oil and the federal government in an air service. Deputy Chairman Edward FitzGerald of the Canadian Advisory Committee reported the situation to London. However, Fur Trade Commissioner Angus Brabant did not believe such a service would be of ". . . material use or benefit to the Fur Trade Department".

FitzGerald suggested that Brabant give the question of air transport further consideration. As an incentive, he drew attention to the loss of three days' shipping time when the Company ship *Nascopie* needed to "double her track" to move a manager to a northern posting. A hydroplane could prove useful in such cases.

While British and Canadian Bay staff monitored air transport's permanency and value to the fur trade, a 35-year-old Royal Air Force pilot who had flown in the Archangel Expedition at the end of World War I offered Bay H.Q. in London a serious proposition for establishing an in-house corporate fleet. William R. Humphreys submitted a comprehensive document outlining routes from Edmonton to bases at Athabasca and Fort Providence, personnel required, aerodromes and buildings. As an airplane, he suggested an amphibious type called a 90-mph Vickers Mk. IV Viking powered by a 450-horsepower Napier engine.

"This machine lands very slowly on water, land or ice equally well, but is rather expensive. This however is made up by the saving in prepared landing grounds," he noted on 13 August 1921. "It takes a good useful load and has fair speed and long distance capacity."

Humphreys had spent time in Canada as a mining engineer and rancher and presumably understood the Canadian climate. He pointed out that flying in the Northwest would be practical for nine months of the year and suitable landing areas already existed at a few stations. With little expense, more could be developed and facilities for hangers easily arranged.

To further his arguments, Humphreys listed benefits which could accrue to the Hudson's Bay Company by accepting his proposals. Surveys of uncharted country and tracts of "the regular run of animals" would be invaluable. Forest fire location and stereographic maps eased trail-making and pinpointed animal habitat. Humphreys saw Canada-wide use of airplanes in the location of fish shoals from the air. In another communication eight months later, he appealed to the Company's competitive sense.

"A point which might appeal to Brabant, your Fur Commissioner, is the wonderful monoply which could be obtained for the Company by landing trappers and their food in fur countries inaccessible," he explained.

Humphreys' outline included several specifics concerning personnel and airplanes. For example, ". . . the conquest of the great northwest," he estimated, would create a total cost of £8,682 per year. This included

A Hudson's Bay Company Grumman Goose aircraft flies over Northern Canada one summer in the late 1960s. The HBC began flying its own planes in the North in 1939.

Wings Over the North

By ROBERT S. GRANT

one airplane, six staff, fuel, oil and interest at six percent. He later modified the proposal to subsitute a Curtiss airplane for half the Vickers' £5,000 cost.

On 10 June 1922 another aviator — F. Sydney Cotton — also intimated a desire to negotiate with the Company to install airplane services in Labrador. Well-known to the Bay through his pioneering exploits in Newfoundland during 1919-21, Cotton's background included winter experiments in connection with seal-spotting.

From January to April 1922 his two open cockpit biplanes logged 10,000 miles from Botwood and St. John's without an accident — a remarkable achievement considering the poorly mapped coasts and unreliable engines of the time. In view of this, he and partner Alan S. Butler planned to meet the requirements of the fur trade if such a ". . . proposal is favourably regarded by the Company".

Both Humphreys' and Cotton's suggestions did not convince Commissioner Brabant. A letter signed by Assistant Secretary J. Chadwick Brooks in London sealed the fate of any undertaking on 21 June 1922. They were thanked for the information furnished but it was regretted ". . . that we [the Governor and Committee] are not able, at the present time, to avail ourselves of your offer."

Another well-known aviation organization, likely unaware of Cotton and Humphreys' efforts, contacted

Manitoba Archives

Aircraft were becoming common in the North by the late 1920s. These planes, a Fairchild and a Fokker Super Universal, were photographed at the junction of the Liard and Mackenzie rivers in 1928.

the Hudson's Bay Company a year later. Active in forest cruising, patrol and other work associated with pulp and paper companies, Laurentide Air Service and associated Fairchild Aerial Surveys (of Canada) Ltd. indicated they would quote rates for carrying mail and inspectors. As a token of the practicality of airplanes to the fur trade, they enclosed photographs of the Moose Factory post taken in 1922 by their airmen.

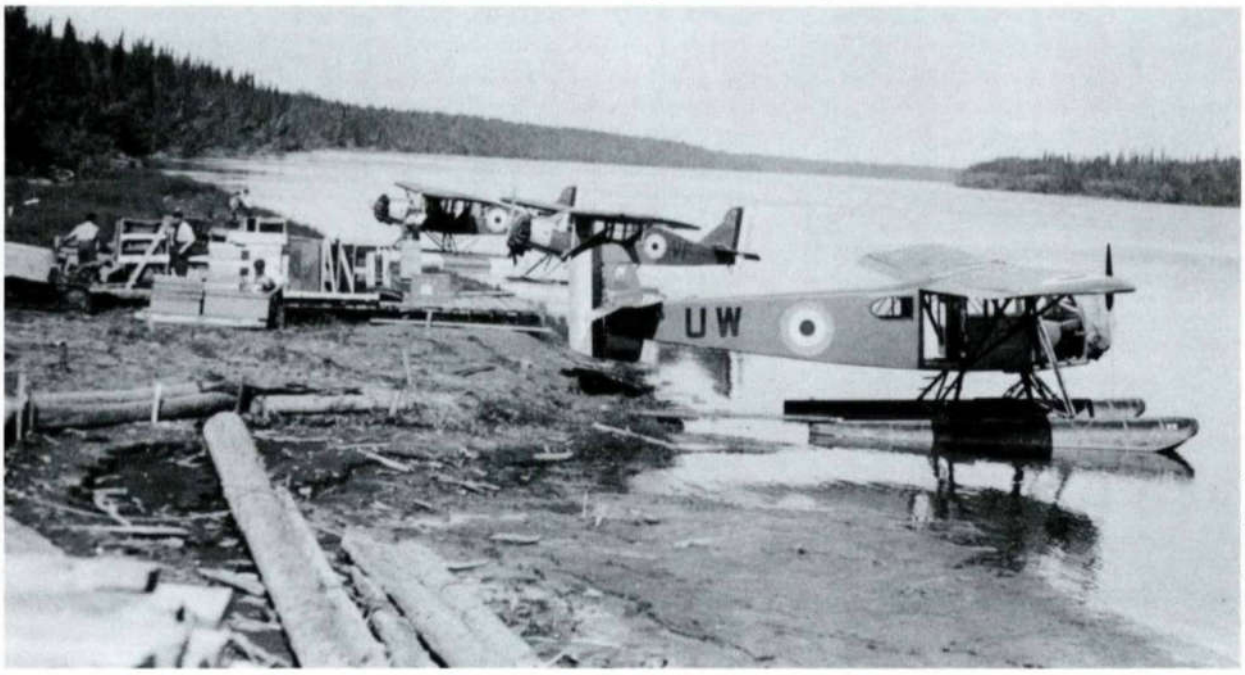
All assaults from the industry failed to persuade the HBC to establish its own fleet. Winter flying, despite claims put forth by transportation-wise proponents, was still in an experimental stage. Prevailing low temperatures would restrict flights to 100-mile stretches. This, in deputy chairman FitzGerald's view, necessitated costly supply bases placed enroute with regard to suitable landing areas where "... ski runners could be used as the wheel and boat type landing gear would of course be useless."

Winnipeg's executive department of the Canadian Committee decided to keep an eye on the budding aviation industry. In fact, the Secretary of the Canadian Air Board in Ottawa expressed his opinion that difficulties of winter flying were not insuperable and FitzGerald also pointed out that machines operated constantly in Scandinavia's cold weather. In addition, the Canadian Air Force conducted experiments at Camp Borden, Ontario, and a year-round airplane flew out of High River, Alberta.

In the meantime, improved mapping, advancing technology and experienced "devil men," as Indians and Inuit called the pioneer airmen and mechanics, helped establish commercial aviation on a sounder basis by annihilating the obstacles of yesteryear. The days of picturesque canoe brigades or ravenous husky dogs were clearly numbered as the Hudson's Bay Company chartered airlines to meet their transport needs.

"It seems to us that for a start it might be best to utilise the facilities now existing which are operated by experienced men rather than install machines ourselves," FitzGerald said. "At least until we are able to demonstrate the real usefulness of flying in a prac-

Fairchild and Bellanca aircraft at R.C.A.F. Station Buffalo Park, Fort Fitzgerald, Alberta, circa 1930.



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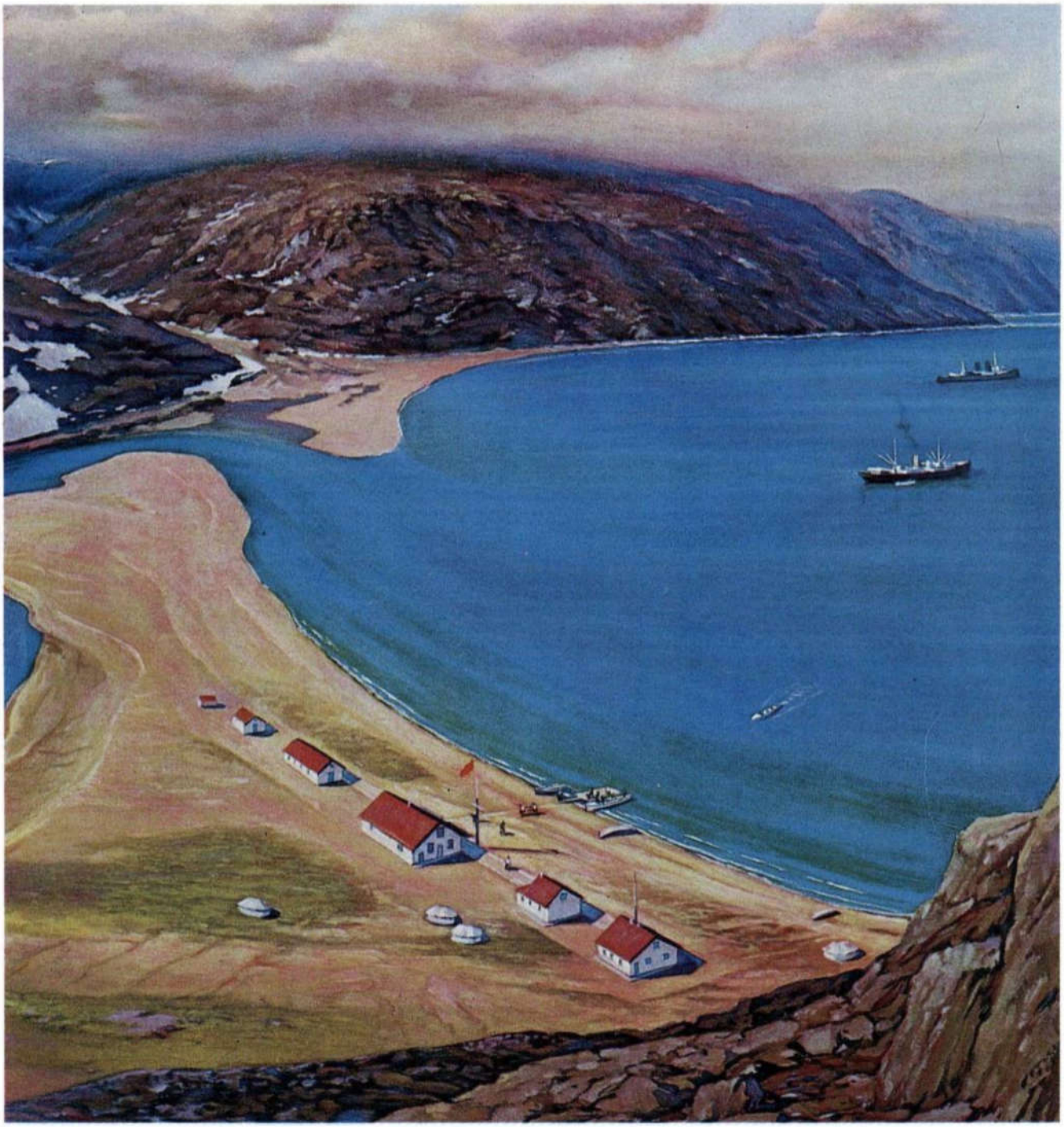


While Hudson's Bay Company officials in London and Winnipeg debated the merits of establishing a Company air service, remote HBC posts continued to be well served by ships. The HBC supply ship "Nascopie" and a government patrol ship, the "N.B. McLean", are seen lying off Wolstenholme Post at the southwest entrance to Hudson Strait in 1933. (Painted for the Hudson's Bay Company by A. Sherriff Scott).

HBC Archives

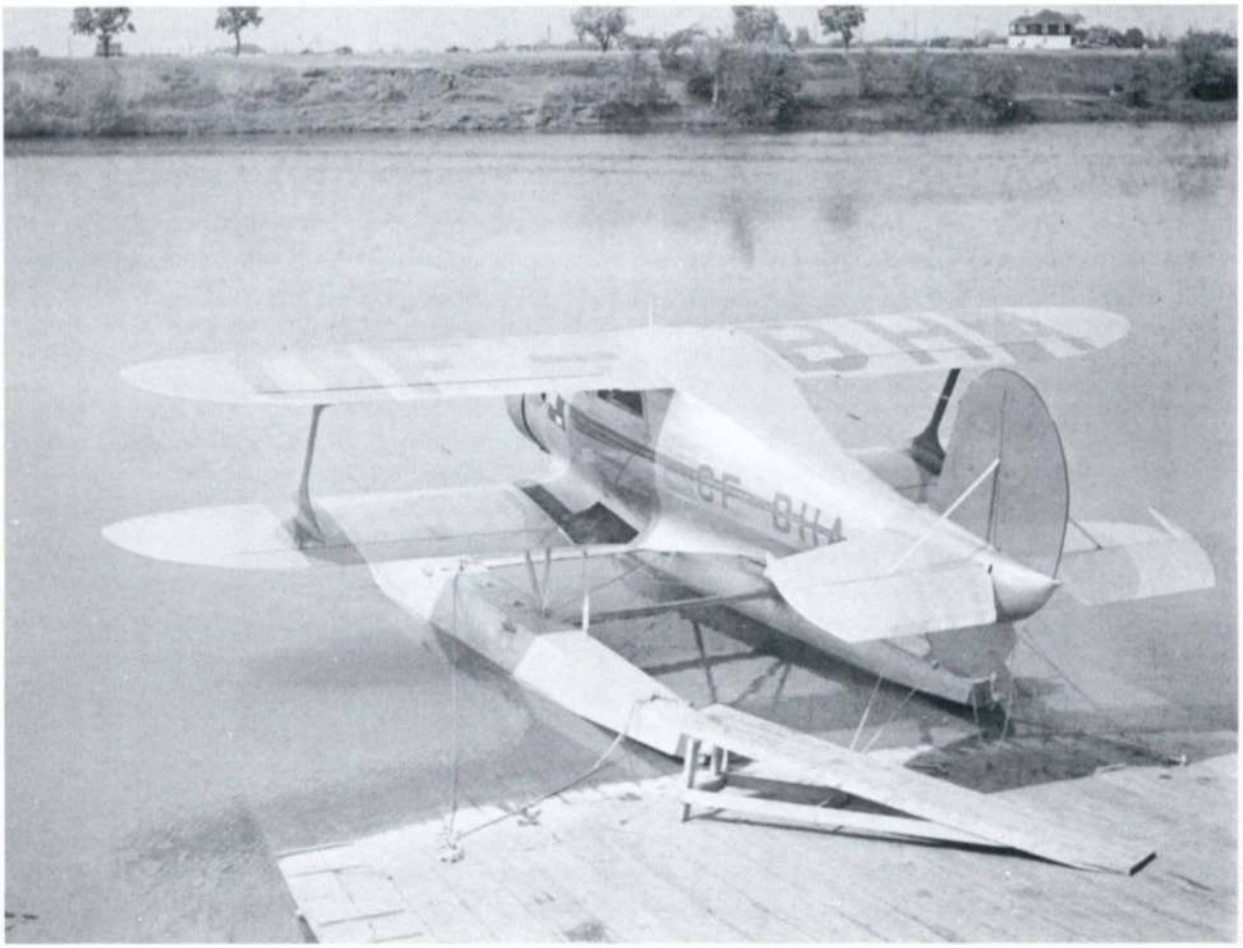
The Company's first aircraft "CF-BMI", a Beechcraft Model 18D, at Winnipeg, 1939.

HBC "Beaver" aircraft at Norway House, Manitoba, 1951.

HBC Archives

HBC cargo is unloaded from a Northern Airways plane at Frances Lake, Yukon Territory, spring 1938. Left to Right: Jack Hilditch, HBC fur buyer, Vancouver; F.S. Bailey, HBC Post Manager, Frances Lake; J. Gregg, HBC Manager, Whitehorse; pilot Les Cooke. The photograph was taken by Harper Reed, Indian Agent at Telegraph Creek.

Hudson's Bay Company aircraft CF-BHA on the Red River at Winnipeg, June 1940.



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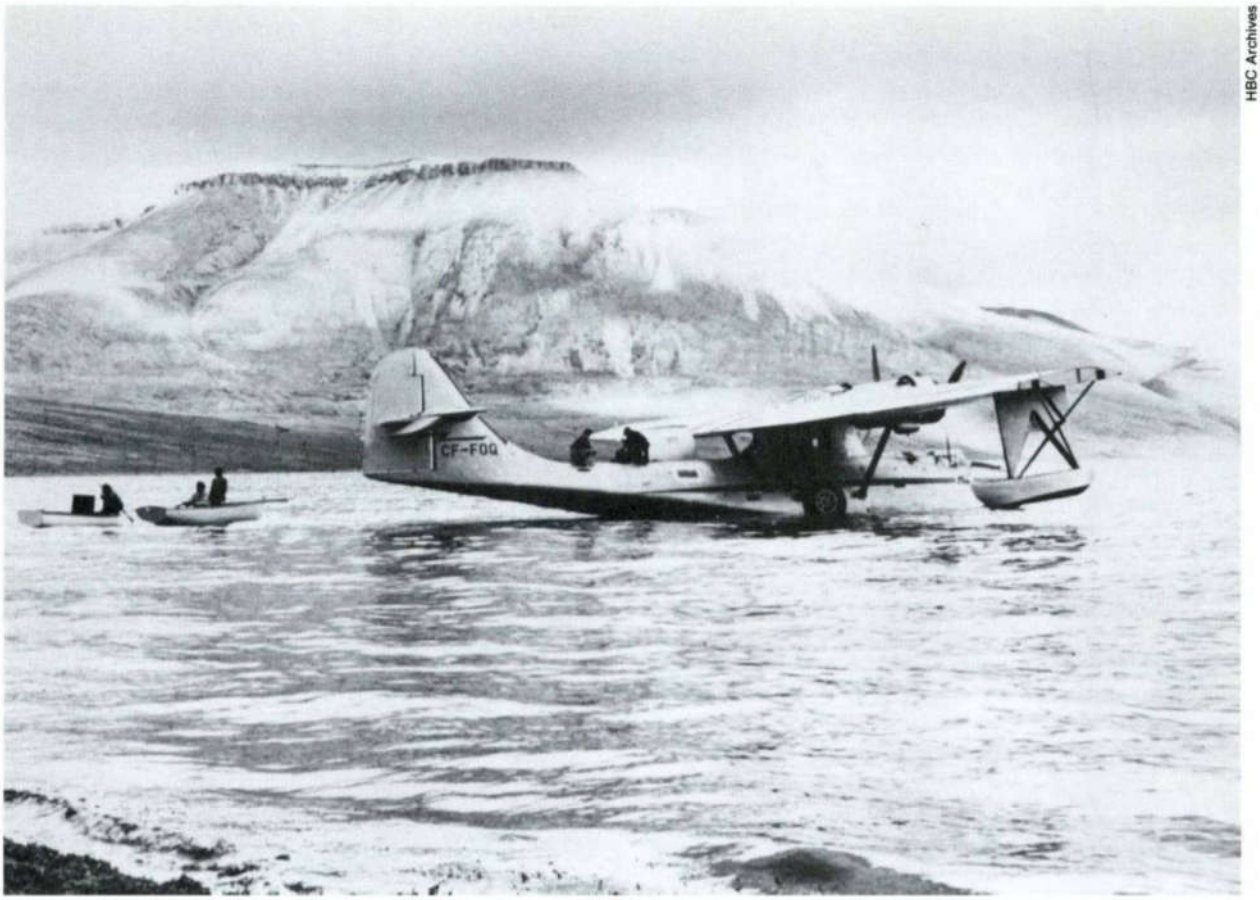


HBC Archives

Twin-engined Canso amphibian (CF-FOQ) owned by the Hudson's Bay Company from 1947 to 1951.

tical way both as to carrying our officers to and from the north country and as to carrying goods."

On 14 July 1927 a detailed memorandum submitted to the Winnipeg office confirmed that feasibility, safety, and reliability of ". . . aerial reconnaissance and general transportation . . . seem to constitute proven facts". The next question concerned the amounts of money to be risked to ascertain whether aviation would be profitable.

"We must try and find out if the undoubtedly greater amount of work that can be accomplished, combined with the time-saving factor during the extremely short Northern season, compares favorably with the expenses incurred," continued the memorandum. "The only solution seems to lie in a practical test."

The HBC needed to make a choice either to operate their air arm or allow another company to manage one on their behalf. An Oklahoma group called the Marland Oil Company was considered as a partner, with the name Hudson's Bay-Marland Airlane Ltd. This combination, the memorandum stressed, would account for a large profitable mileage ". . . which could best be attained by enlarging the field of operations through a separate purely commercial company."

A detailed summary proposed capitalization of the airline at $100,000 allowing for future expansion without capital increase. Of this, $50,000 would be paid immediately with $25,000 each furnished by the Hudson's Bay Company and Marland Oil. Mileage charges would be 50 cents per mile for a $12,000 airplane and a $6,000 pilot salary for 20 cents per mile profit. Management estimated 30,000 miles annually.

"The figure of 30,000 miles is surely not too high, enabling us to make a thorough reconnaissance of the Mackenzie Basin, the Mesozoic-Paleozoic Contact Zone and the entire Foot Hill area, including all ordinary transportation for [Glen] Ruby and our Scouting Department," the memorandum concluded. "On account of the character of this aviation matter, we have to be especially on guard against any 'wild schemes', and conduct the entire subject on a strictly business standpoint."

Further correspondence indicated serious concerns over "unduly high" insurance rates. At the time, only one firm in the United States handled aviation risks. On 22 June 1928 the Toronto *Financial Post* claimed that enquiries regarding flying in relation to life coverage swamped insurance companies. Also, questions

concerning the compensation laws of Alberta and Saskatchewan became a matter "requiring vigilant attention, otherwise, we may discover that we have entered into uncovered liabilities of great extent," wrote J. Chadwick Brooks to the Canadian Committee on 3 April 1928.

Whatever the reason, the Hudson's Bay-Marland Airlane Ltd., did not materialize. Still, the Bay kept its sights directed towards changes taking place in aviation and the possible threats they might present. A July 1928 edition of *National Geographic* published an article featuring some photographs of airplanes ". . . which indicates aeroplane trapping as a possible form of competition by smaller people which may become serious if permitted in Canada," Brooks noted disapprovingly. A year later, he queried Sir Robert MacLean of Vickers in Southampton, England, about flying boats under construction.

"We are interested in developments of this nature, because part of our trade is carried on in northern portions of the Dominion of Canada where communication by land and water is extremely difficult," he said.

In Canada, Company men such as Fur Trade Commissioner C. H. French, pressed for airplanes by justifying their reduction in freight expenses. He pointed out to the Governor and Committee in London that spring fur shipments cost as much as 60 cents per pound and 40 cents per pound from Fort Chipewyan to railhead at Waterways, Alberta.

By using air routes, such spring movements could be discontinued. In one case, a flight to Trout Lake with 1,000 pounds of urgently needed dry goods cost $750 round trip. On return, the same airplane carried $55,000 in furs and saved $1,500 insurance.

Another incident in February 1929 underlined the practical use of an airplane in the high North. Communications via radio with the M.S. *Fort James*, in the North for a successful attempt to bridge the Northwest Passage failed for unknown reasons. Also, the vessel's captain and the King William Land post manager were unable to move part of the crew to Cambridge Bay for overwintering; consequently, food supply shortages became serious. A dire report claimed that 7,000 pounds of provisions must be delivered to prevent death by starvation.

"We have arranged to send two aeroplanes carrying Mr. [R.H.G.] Bonnycastle and Mr. [Paddy] Gibson to Cambridge Bay," wrote French on 6 February 1930. "In order to relieve *Fort James* we propose to send these two planes from Cambridge Bay with all provisions they can carry and bring back with them as many of the *Fort James* crew as can be carried to spend the spring at Cambridge Bay."

Before the airplanes flew north, a wireless message arrived explaining that the ship's operator suffered from

Coppermine Inuit pose near CF-BMI, the orginal HBC Beechcraft, 1939

HBC Archives

influenza and could not contact the outside world. This relieved some of French's anxiety, but the matter underlined further reasons for a Hudson's Bay Company air-arm. Western Canada Airways in Winnipeg suddenly became "very difficult and unbusinesslike" quoting $7,000 for the flight to King William and then raised it to $16,000 but, in the end, refused to go. Luckily, for the stranded men, the trip did not become necessary since food supplies lasted until more were obtained.

For several years the Hudson's Bay Company continued chartering airplanes and from time to time made more inquiries concerning new types of craft. At one point, Governor Charles V. Sale in London queried the Ford Motor Co. Ltd. when a June 1930 *National Geographic* issue showed photographs of a Ford Tri-Motor. He wanted to have all printed matter on the Dearborn, Michigan-built airplane for submission to the Canadian Committee if Ford's reply showed an "encouraging nature".

The expense of the Ford product stalled further development. As a seaplane, the model 5-D-5 cost $60,000 in April 1932. In a detailed memo prepared by Michael Lubbock, assistant to Governor Sir Patrick Ashley Cooper, on 21 April 1937, the Company finally conceded that their organization should become air-minded. The sooner they formulated such a policy, the better off "we should be in the long run," it read.

"If we neglect such education, we shall fall behind the times and shall eventually be forced to drive the organization into the air, which could not be as satisfactory as if they gradually assimilated the change," the memo said. "We believe we are protecting our future and our future profits by starting at this time."

A general-purpose airplane with floats and skis would fill the niche created by the Company's peculiar long-range, large-capacity and short-takeoff needs. Studies of several types including single-engine Stinson Reliant SR-9s, Vickers, Northrop, Noorduyn Norseman and two de Havilland models commenced. The twin engine Lockheed 12A looked adequate, but initially the Company leaned towards the singles' quicker takeoff and easier winter handling.

While Company officials pondered the many makes of airplanes, tonnage reported by airplanes across the country dramatically increased. From virtually nothing in the early 1920s Canadian airplanes flew 10,755,524 miles and carried nearly 25 million pounds of freight as well as 141,158 passengers. As these developments went on, the Hudson's Bay Company decided upon a Beechcraft 18D, a low wing, twin-engine eight-passenger monoplane, originally powered by two 300-hp Jacobs engines

Produced in Wichita, Kansas, the versatile Beechcraft Model 18D could utilize floats, wheels or skis. By the time Supervisor of Transport Paul Davoud travelled south to pick up the airplane, the purchase price stabilized at $64,000. On 25 April 1939, registered CF-BMI, it landed in Winnipeg for the first time.

Almost immediately, the Beech 18 became a familiar sight throughout the Northwest Territories and Labrador. In the first few months of service, Company airmen transported Governor Patrick Ashley Cooper, Canadian General Manager P. A. Chester and Assistant Manager of the Fur Trade Department R. H. Chesshire on a 4,685 mile tour of 29 posts. Until September 1941, when a severe storm at Richmond Gulf sent CF-BMI to the sea bottom, the twin-tailed airplane served the Company well.

Since the Beechcraft's demise, a long line of airplanes have carried the colours of the Hudson's Bay Company. A second Beech 18, a Noorduyn Norseman, a de Havilland Beaver, a Douglas DC-3, de Havilland Twin Otter and a sleek Mitsubishi MU-2 all served the Company and its customers over the years.

Now an era has ended. With its operations concentrated in Southern Canada, the Hudson's Bay Company flies no more in the North.

Robert S. Grant is an aviation journalist. He lives in Thunder Bay, Ontario.

Wings for HBC

Notes and instructions will be issued shortly to all post personnel covering radio communication procedure, marking and levelling of landing runways for winter operations and weather reporting, and preparations have been completed for establishing gasoline caches at various posts. Successful operation will greatly depend on the accuracy of weather reports and judgement of safe landing conditions, and the men at the fur trade posts will have an important part in establishing the alert ground control which is so helpful in extended operations. It is hoped that before long all air operators in the North will be able to know they can expect a high standard of accurate information and intelligent assistance from all fur trade posts.

When the Company's ship heads north in June, on each side of her streamlined nose will be a flag, rich in tradition and known everywhere — the Red Ensign with the familiar H B C lettering. Long flown from every post of the Hudson's Bay Company, it has carried into Canada's Arctic protection and understanding and prosperity. Now it will be a flash of bright colour along Arctic airways — but what it stands for has been written in the lives of fur traders over the span of three centuries.

— Paul Davoud
in "The Beaver",
March 1939.

JAMES MACKENZIE, REBEL

Son of the Firebrand

By Chris Raible

Following sabbath services on 31 July 1814 the elders of the parish kirk in Alyth, Perthshire, Scotland assembled in formal session. Summonsed to appear before them was one Isabel Reid, "late servant to Andrew Mustard" in nearby Newton of Balhary. Upon being questioned, the young woman confessed that she had "lately brought forth a child in fornication". Being further interrogated as to who was the father of her child, she declared, "It was Wm. Lyon Mackenzie, Merchant in Alyth," and that "the child was begotten in this Parish." Appearing next before the elders was this named general store owner, and when the declaration was read to him, he admitted that it "was all truth".

Twenty years later, William Lyon Mackenzie would become the first mayor of Toronto, and not long thereafter gain a permanent place in Canadian history as a leader of the ill-fated 1837 Rebellion. He was only 19 years old when he publicly confessed that he had fathered an illegitimate child. His life is familiar to all readers of William Kilbourn's *The Firebrand* (published in 1956 and still in print), but the son's story has never been told. Never as influential as his father, James Mackenzie nevertheless made his way, and eventually became a prominent citizen and judge in western Ohio.

The boy was barely two weeks old when his parents came before that parish kirk session. The father was rebuked for his sin, a fine of 13 shillings and 4 pence was levied and paid "to purge the scandal". Soon thereafter the child was baptized James Mackenzie.

James Mackenzie was given into the care of Elizabeth Mackenzie, his grandmother. A profoundly pious Presbyterian, she no doubt fully approved of the dark process which absolved the sin of her only child, William Lyon Mackenzie. Forty-six years old when she was married, she had been widowed a few weeks after her son was born, so she alone had reared him. At sixty-five she was thus once again responsible for the upbringing of a small child. And soon, as she had been 25 years before, she was left largely alone to fend for herself and for the boy.

His grandmother's puritan principles were permanently imprinted on the conscience and character of young James. It was she who urged him always to use his God-given talents, always to strive to do better. It was she who taught him to say his prayers, to read his Bible, and to trust in Providence. Again and again James' adult letters testify to the profound influence on him of that extraordinary old woman. Eleven days after her death (she lived to be 90), he wrote to his father, "I think often of my grandmother . . . she gave to me as to you the first impulses and what is good I owe to her. In looking back I thank Heaven that no instance of unkindness rises against me to her . . . Kind good noble hearted being — I feel she was in her quiet unobtrusive goodness superior to your Statesman and the mockery of great men . . ."

In 1820, his father emigrated to Canada, and two years later eight-year-old James, grandmother, and Isabel Baxter — the young woman Elizabeth had selected, personal tastes and the fates cooperating, to become her son's wife and thus James' stepmother — all followed. In June the trio arrived in Quebec; in July Isabel and William were married in Montreal; in August they were all settled in Dundas where James' father was in partnership in another general store. But "settled" is hardly correct — less than a year later the family removed to Queenston, and eighteen months after that, in November 1824, to York.

Although hardly more than a hamlet with a population of less than two thousand persons, York was an important place. It was the seat of the government of the province of Upper Canada. Mackenzie had uprooted family and printing office — the previous May he had begun his already notorious *Colonial Advocate* — to plant them at the centre of the political action.

James may have gone to school in York, but not for long. By the spring of 1826 he was working in his father's printing office. It was there that James was eye-witness to the so-called "types riot", the attempted silencing of his father by the smashing of the *Colonial Advocate* printshop. James' sworn testimony described the scene: "I was at tea . . . upstairs and heard a great noise. I went down to the office when I saw Jarvis taking a chase [printing frame] to the front of the office, full of type. He threw them down . . . upon the

National Archives of Canada

View of King Street, Toronto, Upper Canada, 1835.

stones, the quoins [wedges] flew out and the type fell out. Then two or three more scattered them over the yard. . . . They made a great noise upsetting the press. . . . Three of them carried three cases and threw them into the bay and I afterwards went and took out the empty cases . . ."

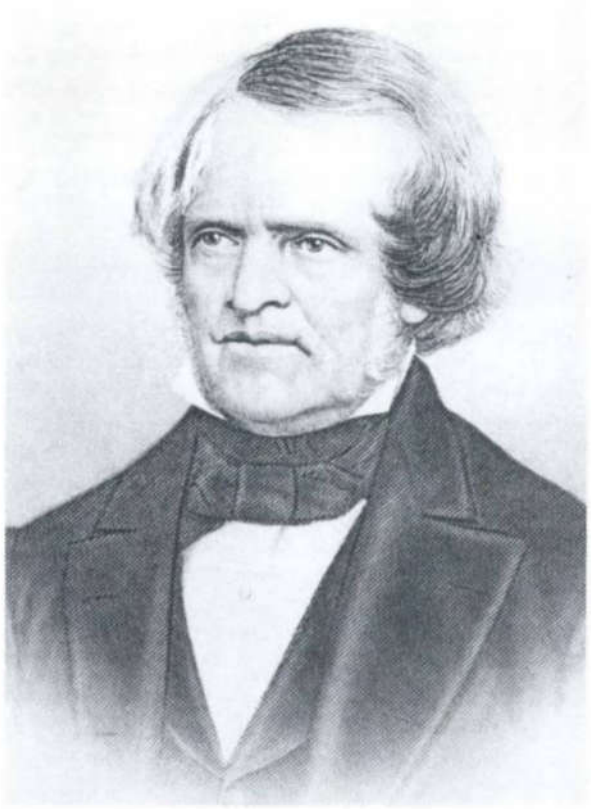
It is not difficult to imagine the young apprentice's feelings of guilt — perhaps he could have stopped them, perhaps he could have called for help — and his fear of parental reprisal. His father was away when the raiders struck. He was often away — commercial concerns, political intrigues and natural curiosity kept the restless Mackenzie always on the move.

This constant paternal absence was not easy for James and he had many unpleasant memories of those early years in York. Much later, soon after his grandmother's death, he poured them out in an emotional letter to his father: "But . . . consider my situation — consider how seldom I saw you but to receive punishment — and how little of love such a course would call forth — you would not wonder that for once or twice I did not properly understand or appreciate your kindness. Remember that the delight — the softening influences of home were never mine — that save my grandmother no one looked upon me but as a being both silly and bad . . ."

In time James became a skilled journeyman printer — and like many in the trade took to drinking, which became another source of constant friction with his father. Nevertheless, he worked for the *Advocate*, and in 1834 joined the Toronto Typographical Society. The union was embroiled in controversy, attempting to put teeth into in its union rules, and James was soon central to the effort. As the chair of its "Committee of Vigilance," he prompted the union to vote sanctions against members and employers who did not meet agreed standards of hours and pay. But times were tough and the society too weak for there to be any real enforcement. When the printers (unsuccessfully) went on strike in October of 1836, James was no longer in town.

The reasons for James' break with his father were purely personal. Their differences over behaviour, as well as of opinion, became too deep to paper over. The specifics of the rift are unrecorded, but there is a suggestion that it was caused by something said by James, in a fierce outburst of temper, about his natural mother back in Scotland, Isabel Reid. James left town, finding jobs as a journeyman printer, eventually making his way to southern Ohio.

The outbreak of the rebellion early in December of 1837 forced an about face; James took the news as a call to return. "Hearing of the rising back of Toronto," he recalled to a friend many years later, "having little or no means, I started back to Canada on foot, &



Father: William Lyon Mackenzie was often a difficult parent.

walked between 4 & 500 miles, lame as I am." After being routed at Montgomery's Tavern, his father had escaped to Buffalo and with a band of volunteers he occupied Navy Island on the Niagara River. James arrived two days after the *Caroline* incident, the burning by Canadian forces of the American steamship supplying the island.

Following the evacuation of Navy Island, James joined a "Patriot" army heading westward. Meanwhile his father went east — rebellion had not yet brought full reconciliation. James served as a commissary officer, "Beg General" the men called him, responsible for supplying their food and other needs by scrounging help from local inhabitants, as the small force moved through the American countryside along the southern shore of Lake Erie.

Their mission was another Canadian invasion, and it came in late February with a landing on "Fighting Island" in the Detroit River. In this abortive effort James took part, was commended by his superior officer, and was almost killed. A few days later his force moved in a futile attempt to support the "Patriots" who had already moved upon Pelee Island. Arriving too late, they were compelled to continue to the supposed safety of American territory "travelling on the ice all night after a march the longest and severest I had ever taken in my life." Ohio was for James, however, no sanctuary. He learned that a $5,000 U.S. federal warrant had been issued for his arrest, and he was forced to flee eastward to New York state.

Three things stand out in James' writings and later recollections of this dangerous and perhaps pathetic Patriot period: his passionate commitment to the cause of Canadian freedom, his deep disgust with the drunken incompetence of the military leadership, and his frustrated rage at the official American government efforts which were so effective in hampering the Patriot campaign. This mixture of idealism and cynicism in regard to all matters political remained with him the rest of his life.

Allen County (Ohio) Historical Society

Son: James Mackenzie's relationship with his father was frequently strained.

James' fighting days were over, although he did not know it. Retreating to Buffalo, he soon conspired in another planned incursion, the so-called "Short Hills" raid, which he intended to join. Threatened with arrest, however, "I fled to the country & waited for tiding of the Expedition, . . . missing by a day a letter I went east . . . & when the letter reached me, the Short Hills Expedition had failed, & its survivors were on their way to Van Dieman's Land."

Despite the turmoil and uncertainty, James managed, thanks to his printing skills. The fall of 1838

The eagle mauls the lion on this membership card for the Patriot Hunters, a secret society dedicated to the overthrow of British interests in North America.

found James in Lockport, New York, editor of the *Freeman's Advocate*, a Patriot Hunter newspaper, published by that American secret society as part of its efforts in support of the Canadian cause. (James had by this time joined the Hunters).

In New York the senior Mackenzie launched a newspaper, *Mackenzie's Gazette*, with the purpose of arousing support for Canadian independence. Early in 1839, he settled in Rochester to be more in touch with refugees and closer to the Canadian frontier. All military action had by then ceased with the failure of the "Battle of the Windmill" and the invasion of Windsor, in November and December of the previous year. By June, Mackenzie was in jail for violating American neutrality laws.

Meanwhile, James struggled on. His newspaper was abandoned that spring of 1839, but he was able to pick up work as a printer in various New York state communities. His letters show his decreasing hope for Canada: "Men who acted as they hitherto have done throughout as pitiful cowards can have no seriously matured views of what liberty is." His letters also reveal his disillusionment with Americans: "the Almighty dollar [is] the only God they worship."

In letter after letter, during the next twenty years, James wrote of his struggles and strivings. His father served as confessor: "You are the only correspondent . . . to whom I would write as I felt naturally. . . . If between parent and child confidence may not exist, where shall it be looked for?"

For James these were unsettled and uncertain times. Filled with regret and repentance, he desperately wanted to reform, to remake himself. He reassured his father: "Here my situation is different — my associates are more marked for their qualities of mind than otherwise — and none of the few are either given to Liquor, gambling or passions." He embarked on a course of self-improvement, boasting of "industry and sobriety", quitting the use of tobacco and feeling "much better so doing," so that with "care and prudence, the avoidance of bad company becomes daily a pleasure."

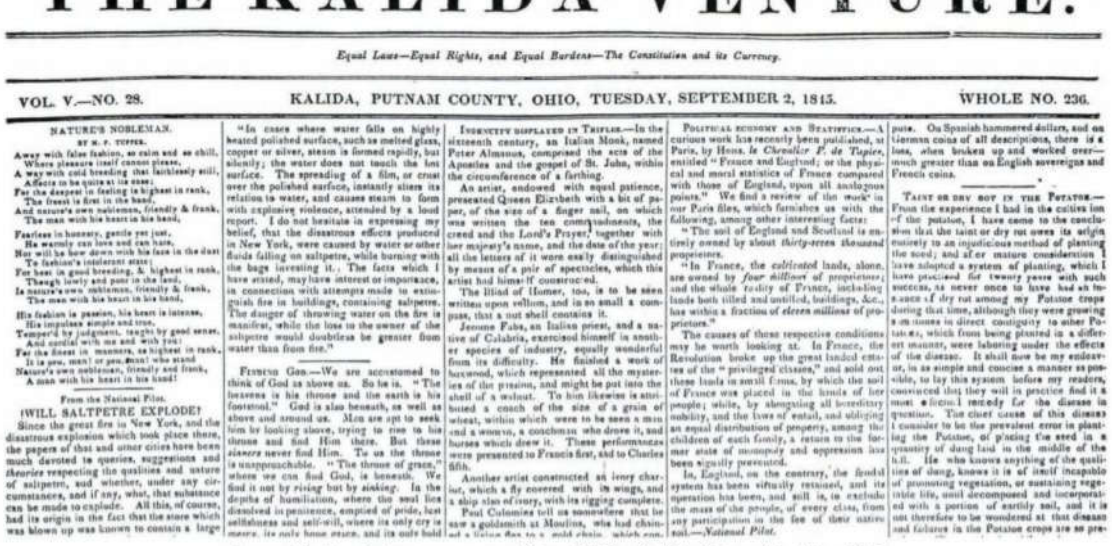
Perhaps the voice of his grandmother was ever in his ear, urging him on — until her death in December 1839 virtually every letter, no matter what its subject, ended with a brief remembrance of her.

The situation changed dramatically in May 1840. Mackenzie senior was released from his American prison. Three months later, he lured James to Rochester, to assist with the publication of his *Gazette*. Their joint effort began in September. "I see our principles won't clash, nor our interests, and if our tempers don't, all may go right," the father wrote — adding a postscript worry about the possibility of James taking up drinking again. Alas it did not work out, but not because of any friction between them — James stayed on in Rochester and the two remained on excellent terms. There was simply not enough money to be earned. The times were changing and interest in the Canadian cause was waning among all but the most deeply involved.

James found work with other newspapers — as editor of the *Daily Workingman's Advocate*, and after its demise as a printer for the *Daily Advertiser*. As he had been in Toronto, he was also active in the printers' union. But in Rochester he found little real opportunity in journalism or in his hoped-for profession of law. By the end of October 1841, the young man had gone west.

His immediate destination was Cleveland, Ohio. An uncle, Peter Baxter, was living there and James would be welcome. The only available work, however, was new to James — elementary education. In a one-room country school near Cleveland he took up teaching, even though he himself had hardly been to school. Each of the next three winters found him in a country school, with classes of up to 80 students. Teaching earned him room, board and a little money to make possible his continued law studies.

In Cleveland, James renewed a former interest in religion. The rebellion, he came to believe, had failed by divine judgment. "We look around us over the wide world of mankind and see little else than physical mental and moral corruption — nothing to give hope to the future but the same dull routine of human folly & crime that may have changed its form and mitigated its cruelty — but still lives in pristine severity . . . I know no account of a heaven more spiritual than the Bible and the worship of my grandmother — no higher



THE KALIDA VENTURE.

Equal Laws—Equal Rights, and Equal Burdens—The Constitution and its Currency.

VOL. V.—NO. 28. KALIDA, PUTNAM COUNTY, OHIO, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 1845. WHOLE NO. 236.

NATURE'S NOBLEMAN.

BY R. P. TORREY.

Away with false fashion, so calm and so chill,
Where pleasure itself cannot please,
A way with cold breeding that lackluster still,
Affects to be quite at its ease;
For the deepest in feeling is highest in rank,
The freest is first in the band,
And nature's own nobleman, friendly & frank,
The man with his heart in his hand,

Fearless in honesty, gentle yet just,
He warmly can love and can hate,
Nor will he bow down with his face in the dust
To fashion's intolerant state;
For best in good breeding, & highest in rank,
Though lowly and poor in the land,
Is nature's own nobleman, friendly & frank,
The man with his heart in his hand,

His fashion is passion, his heart is intense,
His impulses simple and true,
Tempered by judgment, taught by good sense,
And cordial with me and with you;
For the finest in manners, as highest in rank,
It is you, man! or you, man! who stand
Nature's own nobleman, friendly and frank,
A man with his heart in his hand!

From the National Pilot.

WILL SALTPETRE EXPLODE?

Since the great fire in New York, and the disastrous explosion which took place there, the papers of that and other cities have been much devoted to queries, suggestions and *theories* respecting the qualities and nature of saltpetre, and whether, under any circumstances, and if *any*, what, that substance can be made to explode. All this, of course, had its origin in the fact that the store which was blown up was known to contain a large

"In cases where water falls on highly heated polished surface, such as melted glass, copper or silver, steam is formed rapidly, but silently; the water does not touch the hot surface. The spreading of a film, or crust over the polished surface, instantly alters its relation to water, and causes steam to form with explosive violence, attended by a loud report. I do not hesitate in expressing my belief, that the disastrous effects produced in New York, were caused by water or other fluids falling on saltpetre, while burning with the bags investing it. The facts which I have stated, may have interest or importance, in connection with attempts made to extinguish fire in buildings, containing saltpetre. The danger of throwing water on the fire is manifest, while the loss to the owner of the saltpetre would doubtless be greater from water than from fire."

FEARING GOD.—We are accustomed to think of God as above us. So he is. "The heavens is his throne and the earth is his footstool." God is also beneath, as well as above and around us. Men are apt to seek him by looking above, trying to rise to his throne and find Him there. But these *sincere* never find Him. To us the throne is unapproachable. "The throne of grace," where we can find God, is beneath. We find it not by *rising* but by *sinking*. In the depths of humiliation, where the soul lies dissolved in penitence, emptied of pride, lost selfishness and self-will, where its only cry is *mercy*, its safe home *grace*, and its safe hold

INSECTS DISPLAYED IN TRIFLES.—In the sixteenth century, an Italian Monk, named Peter Almanus, comprised the acts of the Apostles and the gospel of St. John, within the circumference of a farthing.

An artist, endowed with equal patience, presented Queen Elizabeth with a bit of paper, of the size of a finger nail, on which was written the ten commandments, the creed and the Lord's Prayer, together with her majesty's name, and the date of the year; all the letters of it were easily distinguished by means of a pair of spectacles, which this artist had himself constructed.

The Iliad of Homer, too, is to be seen written upon vellum, and in so small a compass, that a nut shell contains it.

Jerome Fabe, an Italian priest, and a native of Calabria, exercised himself in another species of industry, equally wonderful from its difficulty. He finished a work of buxwood, which represented all the mysteries of the passion, and might be put into the shell of a walnut. To him likewise is attributed a coach of the size of a grain of wheat, within which were to be seen a man and a woman, a coachman who drove it, and horses which drew it. These performances were presented to Francis first, and to Charles fifth.

Another artist constructed an ivory chariot, which a fly covered with its wings, and a ship also of ivory, with its rigging complete.

Paul Colomies tell us somewhere that he saw a goldsmith at Moulins, who had chained a Lilliput flea to a gold chain, which con-

POLITICAL ECONOMY AND STATISTICS.—A curious work has recently been published, at Paris, by Hons. *le Chevalier P. de Tiepice*, entitled "France and England; or the physical and moral statistics of France compared with those of England, upon all analogous points." We find a review of the work in our Paris files, which furnishes us with the following, among other interesting facts:

"The soil of England and Scotland is entirely owned by about *thirty-seven* thousand proprietors.

"In France, the *cultivated* lands, alone, are owned by *four millions* of proprietors; and the whole *reality* of France, including lands both tilled and untilled, buildings, &c., has within a fraction of *eleven millions* of proprietors."

The causes of these respective conditions may be worth looking at. In France, the Revolution broke up the great landed estates of the "privileged classes," and sold out these lands in small farms, by which the soil of France was placed in the hands of her people; while, by abrogating all hereditary nobility, and the laws of entail, and obliging an equal distribution of property, among the children of each family, a return to the former state of monopoly and oppression has been equally prevented.

In, England, on the contrary, the feudal system has been virtually retained, and its operation has been, and still is, to exclude the mass of the people, of every class, from any participation in the fee of their native soil.—*National Pilot.*

TAINT OR DRY ROT IN THE POTATOE.—From the experience I had in the cultivation of the potatoe, I have come to the conclusion that the taint or dry rot owes its origin entirely to an injudicious method of planting the seed; and after mature consideration I have adopted a system of planting, which I have practised for twenty years with such success, as never once to have had an instance of dry rot among my Potatoe crops during that time, although they were growing on grounds in direct contiguity to other Potatoes, which from being planted in a different manner, were laboring under the effects of the disease. It shall now be my endeavor, in as simple and concise a manner as possible, to lay this system before my readers, convinced that they will in practice find it a most effectual remedy for the disease in question. The chief cause of this disease I consider to be the prevalent error in planting the Potatoe, of placing the seed in a quantity of dung laid in the middle of the hill. He who knows anything of the qualities of dung, knows it is of itself incapable of promoting vegetation, or sustaining vegetable life, until decomposed and incorporated with a portion of earthly soil, and it is not therefore to be wondered at that disease and failure in the Potatoe crops are so pre-

James Mackenzie became owner-editor of "The Kalida Venture" in May, 1845.

morals — no holier truths — no more enlightened liberty than that of Christ. . . . Had (like the old Puritans) the Canadians been strict Christians, Canada would not now have been a British Province."

His criticism of the impiety of political leaders was not reserved for Canadians. Sin was thriving in Ohio, also. "Here, if Democracy were in the hands of better leaders, it could not fail of success. But our leading men are destitute of Religion, have little or no morality — in fact are the advocates of habits more or less subversive of morality on the pretence (false tho' it is) of a wish for the largest liberty." Time and again James would rage against the failure of men in power to live up to the ideals of democracy and Christianity. His Scots Presbyterian heritage, with its constant emphasis on human depravity, never left him, even when his preachings took political form.

Even before this time, James had expressed concern for his real mother in Scotland. In all the extant letters, James only twice clearly mentions her, but there are a number of references to James' forwarding letters through his father "to Scotland", and of letters from there. The only obvious recipient is Isabel Reid. A few years later, in 1845, the reference is explicit and the meaning clear. James wrote, "For two years Isabel Reid has not written to me. I should have helped her in Canada when I did not and since then I have not been able. I receive now no answer to my letters and perhaps she is either disgusted at what she considers my want of regard or she is dead. To her perhaps death would be the happiest lot and I know not many who if they valued life at its real worth for themselves say otherwise. I think I will in a few days enclose a letter to you for her which you will see forwarded. I would like once more, if I may to hear from her." And his father wrote back, "The letter you propose to write to B.R. [Belle Reid] in Scotland had better be let alone, so aunt Betty's last letter [from Dundee] indicates. The intoxicating draught is the evil there, and you nor I cannot remedy that — it's too late now."

After passing the bar examinations in the summer of 1842 James left the growing city of Cleveland — where there were already too many lawyers — to look for a place where there would be room, and thus opportunity. His road led him to Damascus, a village in Henry County. There, he soon discovered, there were few lawyers for a reason: there was little law business. Nevertheless he persisted, and started to put his energy into an old interest, politics. He began to make political speeches and to become active in the Democratic party. The following November he was elected Henry County Prosecuting Attorney.

James found himself elected the equivalent of the "Crown Attorney" for his county, even though he had had virtually no courtroom experience. (Not that his position was especially important or powerful — it was part-time and paid only $85 a year.) He thus combined his love of law with his fascination with politics. In years to come he was to be elected Prosecutor in Putnam County and in Allen County; and ultimately elected as a judge.

Of such an elective system James fully approved. In 1846, when his father wrote about a convention drafting a new New York State constitution, James commented, "I think the Convention has done much in making judges elective by the people. This account-

Chris Raible photo

James Mackenzie's grave at Lima, Ohio.

ability to the popular judgment will do more to sweep away the English decisions and provide a way for a liberal system of laws than even a [new] code or digest would . . . "

He was losing interest in Canada and his attentions were turning closer to home. Unlike his father, James gave up on his former country. "We can do nothing I perceive for a number of years," he wrote. "Responsible Gov't. in Canada is with English supremacy a humbug and always will prove so."

Despite his political success, James did not stay long in Damascus. In 1845 he moved south, to Putnam County, and what was then the county seat, Kalida. The little town provided a somewhat larger pond for him to swim in. He could combine his legal practice with journalism. He may have hated "picking types" as a journeyman compositor, but printing ink was in his blood. In May he became owner and editor of the Kalida *Venture* with its motto: "Equal Laws — Equal Rights, and Equal Burdens — The Constitution and its Currency."

He was to continue his *Venture*, despite periods of economic and political set-back, for some ten years (a longer unbroken publishing period than his father ever managed). Not that James was never tempted to quit it, but he saw no brighter prospect. "I should . . . tack for New York, or some Eastern city, but that I have no hope of getting a chance to scribble for a paper and consequently might be a hewer of wood & drawer of water for years without hope of being better off."

But James had more than his paper to occupy his thoughts — he had begun "paying attentions to a young woman". His decision to marry Lucina Polly Leonard, age 24 (James was 32), was carefully premeditated. "Certainly she . . . appears well, and is I believe a woman of well cultivated and high moral sense. . . . I have made a choice from humble, but not low life . . . not beautiful nor ugly — not highly intelligent — nor yet ignorant — one who was educated in the country and whose affection I have no reason to doubt. . . . " The couple courted for about a year before they were married — despite her family's disapproval — near the end of May 1846.

In 1850 an amnesty made possible his father's return to Toronto. In his last American letter, father advised son: "Law may be full of quirks, but what can you do about it? Work away — edge in a word for reform — help to fill to overflowing the grand reservoir of enlightened public sentiment — and improvement will, must, come."

After more than a dozen years' separation, in 1854 father made a visit to son in Ohio. James was much pleased to see him: "I was glad . . . to find the general agreement of views which exists after so long a separation between us. Another matter I observed . . . that many of my peculiarities of voice, manner, expression, &c. &c. were also peculiar to you & derived from you."

The following January — somewhat discouraged, but not totally dispirited — James sold his printing business. Again his realism saved him from depression: "Independent as I have been for a party Editor I of course am not trusted as I would be, had I been docile; of course, I am not much disappointed. But I wished to be out of a Press whose sphere became too narrow & which neither paid in influence or money . . . But politics finds me a looker on with scarcely an opinion that is definite as to the future . . . "

Three years later James' family made its final move to the larger — and destined to become much more prosperous — community of Lima. This move almost exactly coincided with his father's resignation from the Canadian Legislative Assembly, but for James 1858 was a beginning, not an end. He was back in his much loved editorial enterprise. He bought another newspaper, *The Allen County Democrat*. Although he kept it less than three years, he clearly found in Lima his political home. In 1861 he was to be elected Prosecuting Attorney for Allen County. Four years later he was elected judge of the Court of Common Pleas 3rd District, the second highest court in the state. He was

twice re-elected, in 1869 and in 1873. At the age of nearly sixty-five he retired in 1879.

In 1859, a year before his paper closed, father invited son to contribute a column for his *Weekly Message* in Toronto advocating the annexation of Canada. James did so, writing with strength and conviction, laying out geographical, economic and political arguments. The piece was published in September.

Much to James' profound distress, however, he received no response, indeed heard not a word from his father for many months. Several times he wrote, to no avail. Rather than assuming some illness, lack of energy, or shame for having no money for postage on his father's part, typically James blamed himself. "I would like to know in what I have justified your action, as it has occasioned me surprise and regret." He assumed something he had written had given offence: "If it is my political opinions that offend you, let me remind you that I came to this country in earlier life than you did — and therefore was more facile to catch the impression of American opinions, fluctuating, changing, & far less earnest than you have ever esteemed it." Perhaps, James feared, his father thought James had not condemned slavery enough and had praised the United States too much, "America is the last home of freedom. True, slavery exists here, but is it wise by political convulsion & violence to force it out hastily & without awaiting a reasonable time?" Perhaps father thought James had given up his principles and sold out, "Yet you cannot imagine that in returning to the Press any personal objects of political advancement could influence me. It afforded me what is a meager living, & it scarce affords me that. Coming here was a virtual abandonment of political aspirations."

Whatever the cause, James felt that somehow he had once again, after all these years, failed to live up to his father's expectations, "I have never expected to return to Canada. The location I live in is narrow, unintelligent, greedy & grasping, & so are most of our western people. But they are poor & must be so. I live among them to educate my children for a younger & more improved generation, in the land of the birth of my children, who here may accomplish what I must necessarily fail to do, & have failed to do, owing in part to my being a foreigner & other causes."

This is the last preserved letter but one from James to his father. A reply was hastily written, but its contents are unknown. Whatever the reason for the silence — it may well have been only an aging man's forgetfulness — the two stayed in touch until Mackenzie died a year later in August of 1861. Indeed the last letter he ever wrote may have been to James: "Life, James, is an uncertain boon . . . I'm sorry that you yourself are finding the maintenance of a young and interesting family such a heavy load. All may come right yet. I may have news for you ere long, in which I'll come and tell it to you . . . "

The second half of James life, following his father's death, is easily summarized. As we have seen, he was elected a judge and became one of the more prominent citizens of Lima. He and Lucina had six children, and in time several grandchildren. In time the family built a grand house on Market Street, one of the "golden mile" of the finest homes in Lima.

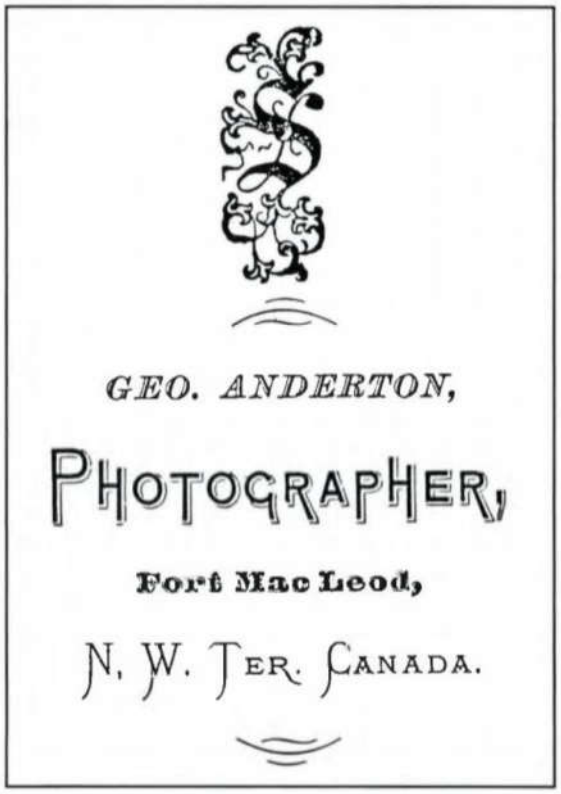
Already a market town and the county seat when James and family moved there, as the century progressed Lima became economically even more important. Oil was discovered nearby and with the continued expansion of the American Midwest it also became an important rail centre. Histories of Lima and of Allen County all make mention of James, but other than his being a respected judge, and his being instrumental in starting the public library, there is little detail. In retirement he came to be admired as a "grand old man" of the legal profession.

Some twenty-five years after his father's death, James was roused to the defence of his father's place in history. John Charles Dent wrote in 1885 *The Story of the Upper Canadian Rebellion*, a well researched history of the events of the time, and sympathetic to the rebel cause, but highly critical of Mackenzie. On reading it, James was outraged: "One thing I painfully feel, that WLM's ability, his eminence & unselfishness . . . are fearfully & designedly misrepresented & falsified. But such is the reward of efforts for the best interest of mankind."

With so few surviving letters and no diaries, we know little of James' inner life or feelings at this period of his life. From the external evidence it seems clear that he felt at last truly settled. Raising and educating his family, doing his duty and more for his community, paying his taxes and criticizing his government — he had become typically American. Unlike his father, James Mackenzie made no dramatic impact on his world — but he made his contribution and he had his influence. He found his place and his restlessness was gone. On 9 May 1901, at the age of nearly 87, James died. His obituary was front page news. ◆

Chris Raible is a Toronto writer. His article on the "ghosts" of Mackenzie House was published in the December 1989/January 1990 issue of "The Beaver". The article on James Mackenzie is based on a paper Mr. Raible presented at a conference at the Edinburgh University Centre for Canadian Studies in May 1991.

The 'Face Puller'



By BROCK SILVERSIDES

George Anderton is a founding father of Western Canadian photography. He holds an important, if obscure, dual honour — he was the first resident photographer to operate in Saskatchewan and, several years later was the first resident photographer to operate in Alberta. This by itself ensures that his name will go down in history. He has also left behind a record of his work; a small but rich assortment of images that reflect the people and the scenes of a fascinating period of Prairie history.

George Thomas Naylor Anderton was born in Leeds, Yorkshire, in 1848 and emigrated to Canada in the early 1870s. The earliest reference to him dates to 1876, when he was employed by George G. Francis, agent for the West Canada Mining Company of Montreal.

Upon the urging of Captain Dalrymple Clarke, a friend of Francis, Anderton joined the North West Mounted Police. He was engaged as a constable (regimental no. 166) in July 1876 in Ottawa and, after training, was formally inducted into the force at the Swan River post by Superintendent L.W. Herchmer.

Anderton was posted to Fort Walsh, a 300-foot-square log stockade located in the Cypress Hills of southwestern Saskatchewan. Built only the previous year, it was home to "B" and "E" troops (about 330 strong) and, as of 1878, headquarters of the entire N.W.M.P.

Walsh was the hub of activity in the North-West Territories during the second half of the 1870s. The Cypress Hills had long been the hunting ground for the Cree Indians and during that decade had become an important meeting place (and battleground) for other Western tribes — the Assiniboine, Saulteaux, Blackfoot, Piegan, Blood and Sarcee. As well, the area was close to the United States border (only a day's ride) and it started to see numbers of Sioux, Crow, Missouri, Assiniboine and Nez Perce groups who were ranging further afield in search of buffalo, and dodging the U.S. Army's attempts to place them on agencies or reservations.

In 1879, an Indian agency post was established at the fort and natives were attracted in greater numbers for treaty payments, and especially for the food handouts during the hungry winters between 1879 and 1883. It is estimated that about 300 families settled at the fort in this period.

A white trading town also sprang up outside the walls as soon as the fort was finished. Firms such as I.G. Baker and T.C. Power established branch outlets, and independent traders Abe Farwell and Moses Solomon prospered. The settlement contained two hotels, billiard rooms, a barber shop, a blacksmith and a carpenter.

Fort Walsh was the terminus of an established supply route from Fort Benton, Montana, and was the postal centre for the region. The picture one gets is of constant activity, hustle and bustle and interaction between police, Indians and merchants. One writer described "a constant parade of drifters, wandering freighters, traders and hunters passing through". It was in Fort Walsh that Anderton started to practice the photographic trade and, for numbers and variety of subjects, he could not have asked for a more ideal locality.

One of the more exotic groups of visitors to the Fort Walsh area were the 300 lodges of Sioux and Cheyenne (numbering 3,000) under the leadership of Sitting Bull, fresh from their victory over George Armstrong Custer in June 1876 at Little Big Horn. They arrived in January 1877 and were to stay in the vicinity until 1880 (Sitting Bull until 1881).

On 17 October 1877 Fort Walsh was the site of a meeting between Sitting Bull and General Alfred Terry of the United States Army who had been sent to induce the Sioux to return to the U.S. In between negotiating sessions, Anderton photographed the complete assembly of participants in the courtyard.

Anderton may have spent the last few months of his service at Fort Macleod for it was there on 19 July 1879 that he was discharged from the force. He immediately returned to Fort Walsh to establish a photographic business.

In May of 1880 Anderton relocated south of the border at Fort Benton. Shortly thereafter he engaged in a bi-national partnership with another newcomer, photographer William H. Culver. Culver, a native of Iowa, had spent time in Kansas prior to his own move to Montana in 1879. Upon Anderton's arrival in town, the two set up a tent studio.

Going into business with another photographer meant that they could purchase twice the amount of supplies at a lower cost. Between them, Anderton and Culver could cover a lot of ground — Montana Territory and the North-West Territories.

One account gives the team credit for procuring the first views of the Great Falls of the Missouri River:

> That June they decided it would be a fine piece of work to journey south and take a picture of the big falls. They hired a team of cayuses, and a buckboard with a darkroom built on the back and drove over the prairie to the Missouri River.
>
> A darkroom was needed at the site because wet plates used then had to be developed immediately after exposures were made. They spent several days at the falls and took numerous pictures.

Little else is known about the partnership, except that it lasted less than a year. According to the 1881 Canadian census, Anderton was back at Fort Walsh as a photographer.

By 1883, the N.W.M.P. decided that the dilapidated Fort Walsh was to be abandoned. The fort continued

Saskatchewan Archives Board

Sioux girls pose for Anderton, whom they called "the face puller", at Fort Walsh, late 1870s.

to act as a magnet for both Canadian and American Indians and this led to tension and border incidents. As a result, the federal government felt that Canadian Indians, who were in the process of being settled onto reserves, should be encouraged to choose sites further north.

The CPR main line passed by thirty miles to the north at the town of Maple Creek and it was felt that the force should have quick access to the railway. The Fort Walsh correspondent of the Macleod *Gazette* reported on 24 April 1883:

> The police post is to be moved in toto to Maple Creek. All the present residents there will move either to the same place or to Medicine Hat.

In May, Anderton decided to relocate to the then booming settlement of Medicine Hat and await the coming of the CPR and customers. A month later, in an article on Medicine Hat, the Macleod *Gazette* made its first reference to him:

> The end of the track is now only eleven miles from here . . . Quite a canvas town has sprung up within the last fortnight. There are seven restaurants and hotels, eight stores, one billiard room, two (coloured) laundresses, two barbers one coloured, and a watchmaker, photographer, baker and blacksmith . . .
>
> It is expected that the track will be here in six days from now . . .

The boom ended that summer after the Saskatchewan River had been bridged. The work crews, hangers-on, and many of the businesses, headed on toward Calgary. Anderton stayed on over the winter of 1883-84.

In the summer of 1884 he opened a branch studio in Fort Macleod. There is a gap in the extant issues of the Macleod *Gazette* which is unfortunate, as a notice of the arrival of a photographer would surely have made the front page. It would appear that the branch was more successful than the home studio. In comparing the patronage of his Medicine Hat and Fort Macleod studios, Anderton came to realize that his branch was in the centre of a relatively wealthy ranching district. The fact that many of the bigger ranches (such as the Oxley and Walrond) were run by British immigrants, while the smaller ones were operated by numerous ex-N.W.M. Policemen meant that Anderton was in his element, and had a wider and more lucrative base of potential customers. He thus shut down the Medicine Hat studio to concentrate on Fort Macleod.

A brief note in a September issue indicates that Anderton and his brother Alfred (who was also his assistant) were already in the public eye:

> Mr. Geo. Anderton and his brother left for the mountains on Monday. They will visit the Crow's Nest Pass, and other points from which views of the Rockies can be obtained. They will doubtless have some interesting views when they return.

Their return was equally deserving of comment:

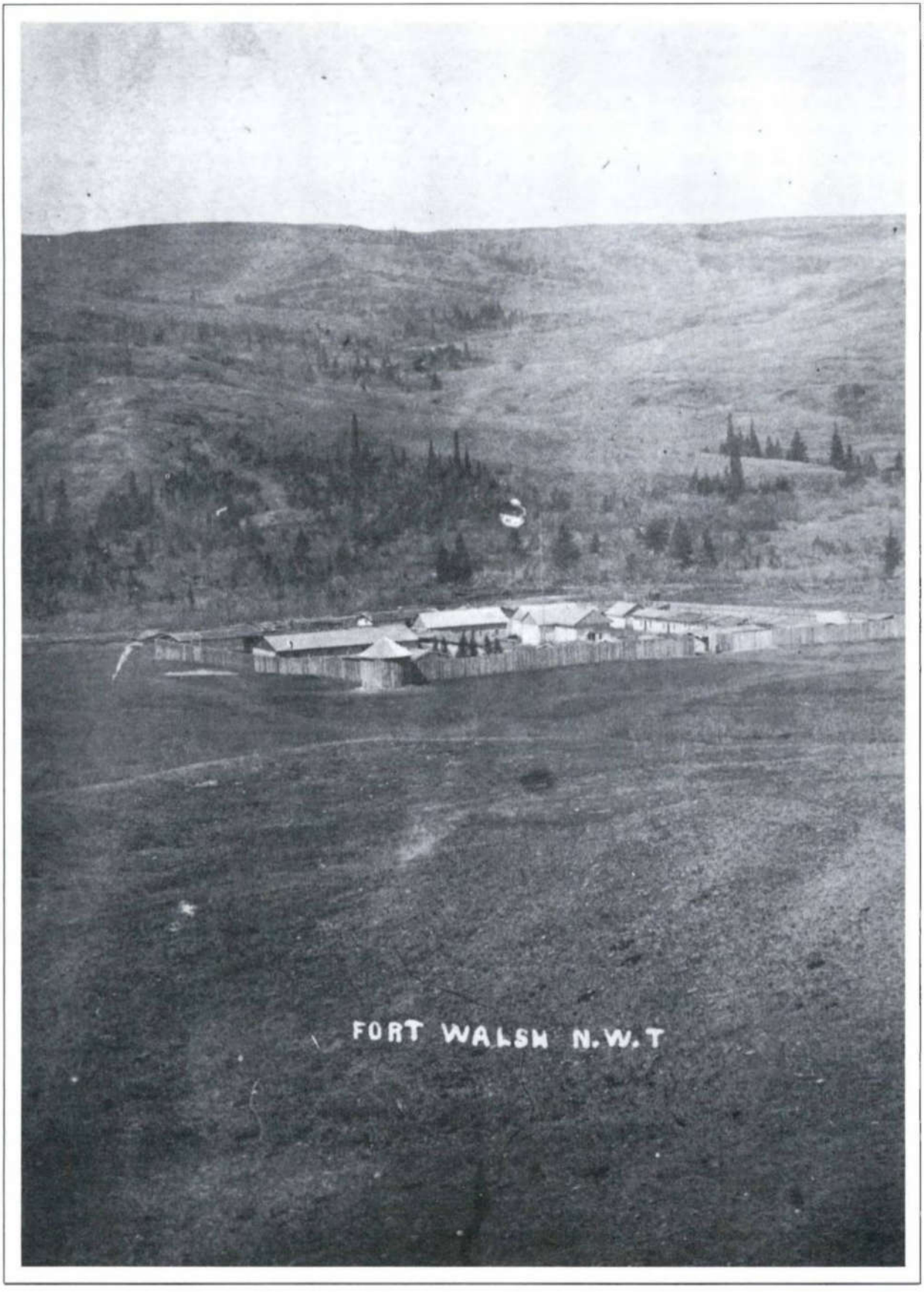
> Mr. Geo. Anderton and his brother returned from their trip to the mountains this week. We were shown the negatives of the views they have taken, and from present indications the small number which they were able to get during short intervals of fine weather, will be a very choice selection. The Messrs. Anderton are now located in the room to the right of the back gate of the old fort, and prepared for business.

That sneak preview was followed up by a gift of finished views to the editor of the *Gazette*, undoubtedly in search of free publicity:

> We have to acknowledge a present of a dozen splendid views from Mr. Geo. Anderton, photographer in this place, and to express our thanks for the same. The views, which are remarkably clear and distinct, were mostly taken in the Crow's Nest Pass, and among them are some of the choice bits of scenery with which that locality abounds.

Little is known of Anderton's photographic activities of the following year — the year of the North-West Rebellion. He seems to have passed up important photo

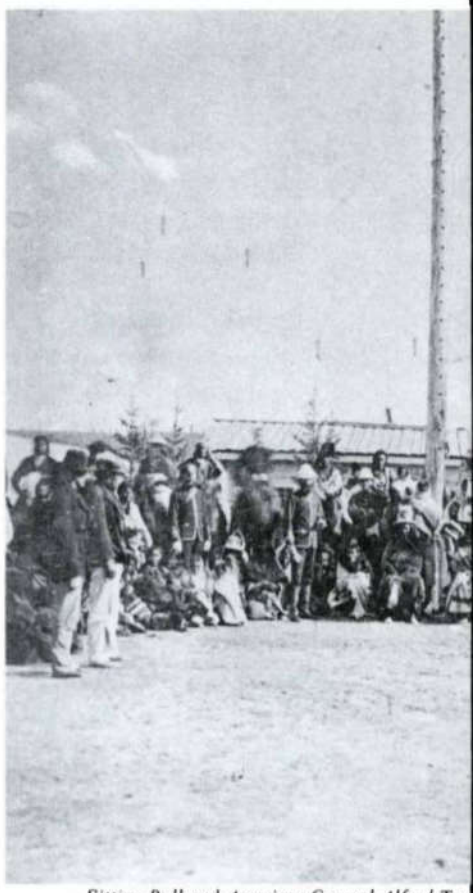
Fort Walsh, N.W.T., 1877-78.



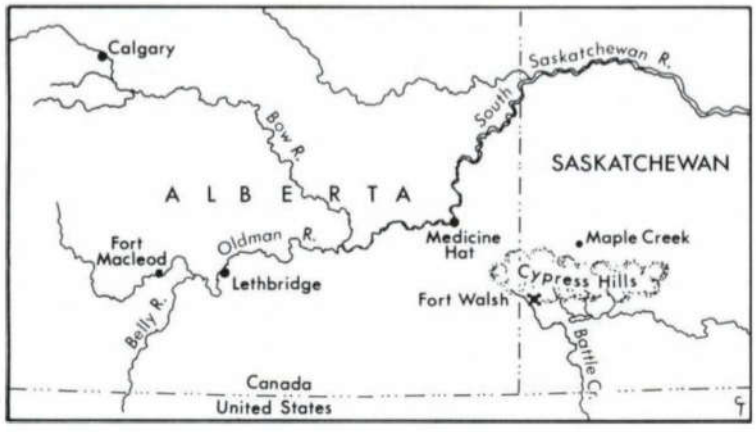
Provincial Archives of Alberta

Glenbow Archives

"Peetan — The Eagle", Blackfoot Indian, Fort Walsh, 1878-79.



Sitting Bull and American General Alfred Terr
Fort Walsh, 17 Oc



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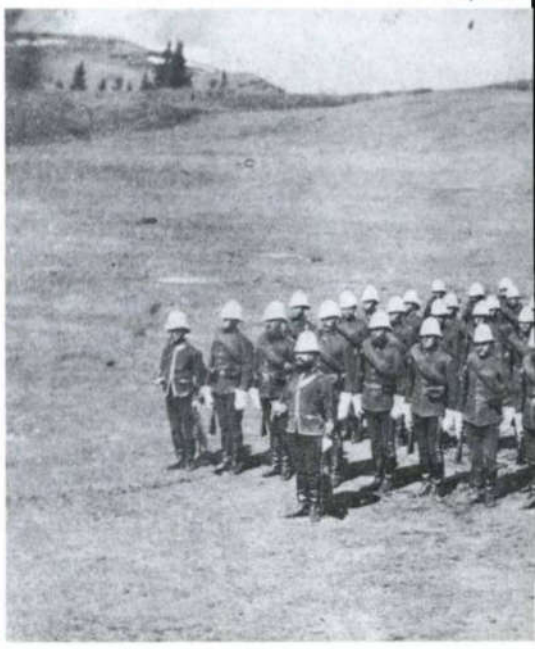

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gotiate a Sioux return to the U.S.,
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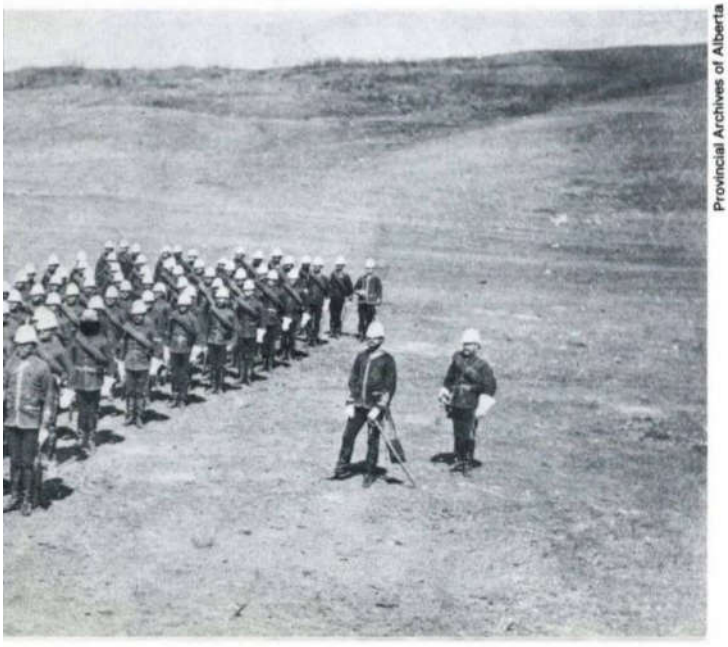
Sitting Bull at Fort Walsh, 1877.

st Mounted Police, Fort Walsh, 1880.



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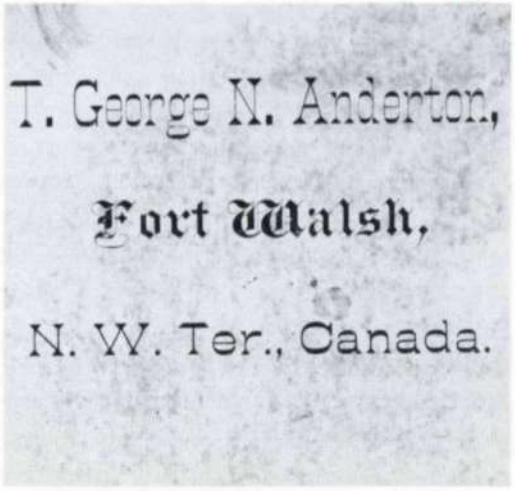


Provincial Archives of Alberta

Indians on the trail near Medicine Hat, 1883.

opportunities and remained in Macleod. He did take a number of photographs of the local militia regiment, the Rocky Mountain Rangers, who were assembled at the N.W.M.P. barracks at the end of April 1885.

Two of these images (transformed into lithographs) were used in *The Canadian Illustrated War News*. This tabloid provided coverage of rebellion events and personalities with a combination of prose and artwork. In the June 20 issue under the heading "The Cowboy Brigade", were two equestrian portraits: one of "Lord Boyle, Captain of the Rangers" and "Adjutant Campbell". Both were credited in print.

Although he had now gained some renown and made a bit of money, Anderton wisely did not limit himself to one calling. Alberta and Saskatchewan were not all that populous in the 1880s and many of the people he photographed were not necessarily paying customers. Thus it would appear that one could not live comfortably solely as a photographer during the settlement period.

Accordingly, in April 1885 Anderton temporarily handed over the management of the studio to his brother Alfred, and opened a saloon.

Fort Macleod in the 1880s was a vigorous frontier town that lived up to the modern stereotype of the "Wild West". Throughout the decade the settlement degenerated into intoxicated anarchy on a more or less regular basis. A fresh shipment of booze was always cause for celebration:

> The town on Saturday night was a little the liveliest it had been for a long time. A liberal supply of fortyrod had arrived the week before, and the boys made up for their long abstinence.

Social events always had the potential for a mix-up as another newspaper report indicates:

> There was a dance in one of the saloons on Friday night, which ended in a free fight, several of the participants being more than slightly disfigured. Too much tangleleg was the cause of the disturbance.

Anderton did not help the situation with his well-intentioned but possibly misguided marketing ploys: "Raffle tonight at Anderton's saloon of a bran [*sic*] new Colt revolver and cartridge belt, 45 calibre".

In the winter of 1885, an unexpected cyclone blowing up to 60 m.p.h. hit Fort Macleod on 3 December and caused, according to a tongue-in-cheek editorial in the *Gazette* "a remarkable disturbance among loose articles such as barrels, wagons and small boys".

Windows were broken, freight wagons overturned, chimneys crumpled and fences went down — "doubtless if one searched thoroughly, pieces of British Columbia might be found in Macleod". Anderton's shop was also damaged:

> Two doors west of the *Gazette* office is A.H. Anderton's photograph gallery. The roof of his place was blown clean off and deposited up against the fence of this office, a distance of thirty or forty yards.

It does not appear that any further photographic work was produced by the Andertons until the following autumn. In September and October of 1886, four prominent southern Alberta Indian chiefs who had remained neutral during the North-West Rebellion were taken on a two-week excursion to Eastern Canada to meet various federal government officials and take in the sights. The four chiefs were Red Crow, Crowfoot, Eagle Tail, and Three Bulls and they were accompanied by Father Albert Lacombe, Indian

MACLEOD BREWERY.

ANDERTON'S BITTER ALE.

RECOMMENDED BY THE FACULTY FOR INVALIDS.

ANDERTON'S EXTRA STOUT

Families and the Trade Supplied in Bottle or Keg.

Provincial Archives of Alberta

Indians at a sundance near Macleod, 1886.

Department translator Jean L'Heureux and N.W.M.P. Sergeant Percy. The group (minus Lacombe) was photographed by Anderton just before their departure on 25 September.

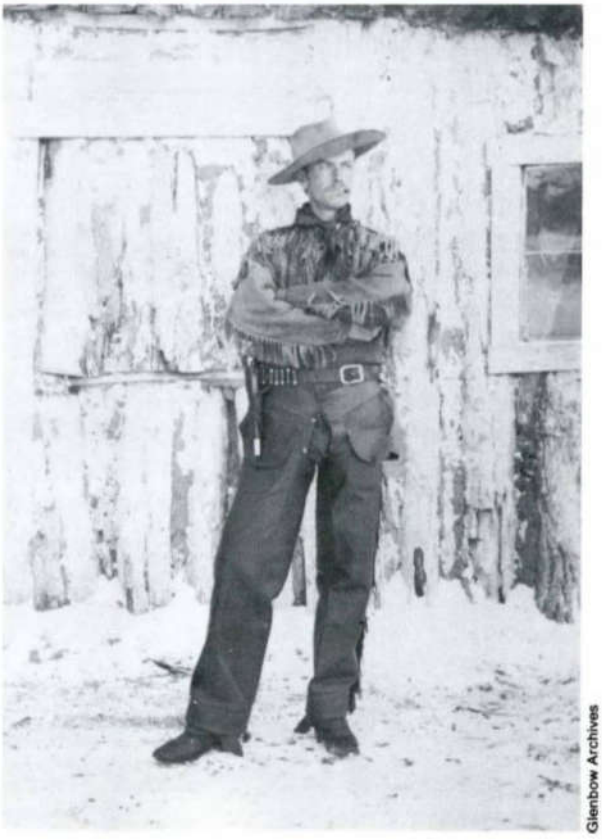
More than ever, Anderton found that the drinking business was keeping him alive. To keep his saloon stocked with a variety of potables, Anderton increased his brewing capacities in March of 1886. The *Gazette* commented:

> A good sized addition to G. Anderton's premises gives him a first class brewery. He now has a boiler and cooler, and every convenience for conducting his business. He is now making porter, which is equal to any in the east, and is made especially for families.

His other products, Anderton's Bitter Ale "Recommended for Invalids" and Anderton's Extra Stout, were said to give a whole new meaning to the term "fire water".

The strength of the lager produced by Anderton and his fellow Macleod brewers was undoubtedly a contributing factor to the town's violent reputation. Officialdom was not amused and decided that they had to get to the root of the problem. They proceeded to take action against those making and selling alcohol and a ban was placed on the sale of beer. Anderton saw the writing on the wall and returned to his first love, photography, in April 1889.

Henry Boyle, Captain of the Rocky Mountain Rangers, poses like a twentieth-century film star, Macleod, 1885.



Glenbow Archives

Provincial Archives of Alberta

Jean l'Heureux, Red Crow and Sergeant Percy (back row) and Crowfoot, Eagle Tail and Three Bulls (front row) enroute to Ottawa, September 1886.

In the spring of 1890, he reminded the people of Macleod that he had returned full-time to photography:

> Having given up the brewing business, I have converted my saloon into a Photographic studio where I am now prepared to do first class work. Childrens pictures taken instantaneously. Local views and Indian pictures for sale.

Anderton occasionally gave public slide shows, although it does not appear there was much of an audience for them. One presentation in January 1892 might be typical:

> Our enterprising citizen, Mr. Geo. Anderton, gave a magic lantern entertainment in the Town Hall on Monday evening last. There was a very slim attendance.

Anderton's activities are hard to trace during the decade of the 1890s. Between 1890 and 1899 he is referred to as a photographer only once in directories. He is not mentioned in the Dun & Bradstreet mercantile ratings except for 1895 and 1896 where no occupation is given. He seems to have avoided any newsworthy activities as his name does not appear in the *Gazette*.

In October 1904, Anderton reappeared, opening another studio on Second Avenue, Macleod. His advertising emphasized his past rather than his present: "A large stock of old time Indian Pictures and old time Views". By the following year, he was running a dual business — photo studio and bath house. Open every day from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., Anderton developed and printed amateur film while handing soap and towels to cowboys.

Anderton ran into financial problems by 1906. A file in the Macleod Courthouse Collection documents that he was incapable of paying a bill of $27.00 owed to the Hudson's Bay Company. Undoubtedly, these problems caused him to reconsider the viability of his studio/bath house and in March 1908 Anderton closed down.

Anderton made one last stab at the photographic profession in May of 1909, working out of his home:

> Geo. Anderton is again doing business for all outside work and finishing amateur work. Residence two doors west of poolroom on 22nd Street.

In 1913 Anderton briefly took over the proprietorship of Macleod's Depot Hotel. He died in the Macleod Hospital on 5 October 1913 at the age of 65.

Anderton's favourite subjects were the various Indian tribes. After moving to Medicine Hat and finally Macleod, Anderton continued to photograph Indians. The Indians had a different approach to life — different customs, dress and societal relations. The white settlers had ambivalent feelings towards them — they were still considered "savages", but their lives were so in tune with the prairie environment that they were at the same time idealized. There seems to have been a ready market for Indian images.

That he was so successful at securing many fine photographs is remarkable, considering the general reluctance of the natives to having their pictures taken. The presence of any photographic apparatus aroused their curiosity and fright, and upon viewing the final product, they labelled the camera "the face puller".

While his posed studio portraits are fine character studies, Anderton's exterior photographs are more immediate.

The shots of groups of Indians in their own environment, gathered in their camps and lodges, or on the move with their beasts of burden and travois extinguish the century of time since their taking and give the viewer an awareness of the period that could not be achieved in writing. Anderton acts the role of witness or bystander.

Yet he did not spend enough time with his camera to do an exhaustive documentation. Of his 37 years in Western Canada, his best work was completed in approximately one decade, 1877-1890. His attention was variously taken up by law enforcement, brewing,

Provincial Archives of Alberta, E. Brown Collection

Early Anderton: N.W.M.P. officers, Fort Walsh, 1877.

bath houses, and hotel-keeping, all important aspects of life during the pioneer period.

A technical assessment of Anderton's photography misses the point, yet it gives an idea of what conditions he worked under. His work is somewhat crude, but considering the development of equipment at that date and his distance from suppliers, its shortcomings are understandable.

It is obvious that Anderton worked with a fairly primitive lens which not only fell out of focus around the edges, but also did not pass as much light as a modern lens. Even with the clear bright light of the prairies, Anderton had to use long exposures. Thus, there is a charming tendency to have horses' tails or dogs' heads a delicate moving blur. This gives that sense of immediacy to the transitory or ephemeral moments.

Anderton presented his images using most of the processes available at the time. Examples of his tintypes, *cartes-de-visite*, cabinet cards and stereographs can still be found, each having its own appeal.

There is no integral George Anderton Collection possessed by any one archive. If any of his negatives still exist, their whereabouts are unknown. Fortunately however, a sizable number of his prints are distributed among the Saskatchewan Archives Board (Regina office), the Provincial Archives of Alberta, the University of Alberta Archives, the Glenbow Archives, the R.C.M.P. Museum, and the Medicine Hat Museum. ♦

Brock Silversides of Edmonton is with the Provincial Archives of Alberta.

The Curious Case of Olive Sternaman

Was It Murder?

By Cheryl MacDonald

On the evening of 13 August 1896 a sad little group disembarked from the Grand Trunk Railway train at Cayuga, Ontario. Olive Sternaman, a neat, slim woman in her late twenties, helped her two young sons off the train, then, her face creased with worry, watched as brakeman Albert Cox assisted her husband to the ground. Since leaving Buffalo, George had lain on a cot in the baggage car, unable to sit or stand. He had been ailing since June. With his income as a carpenter cut off, the family had no money to pay the rent. So George had written to his mother, asking to come home to her with his wife and stepsons.

For Olive, the decision to move to Canada was not an easy one. True, she had been born nearby and still had relatives in the area, but there was no love lost between Olive and her mother-in-law, Eliza Sternaman. All the same, the two women were prepared to tolerate each other for George's sake.

George's brother Avery, a neighbour, Peter Hunsinger, and Eliza had driven a wagon to the station. The ride over country roads from Cayuga to the third concession, Rainham Township, was agonizing for George, who felt every bump and jolt, and nearly as painful for the others, who could do nothing to help. No one was in any mood to appreciate the quiet beauty of the countryside as the wagon climbed the long hill out of the Grand River valley and turned southwards toward Lake Erie.

It was dark when the wagon reached the Sternaman house. The men carried George into the house, to a bedroom just inside the front door. He was barely settled before the first disagreement between Olive and her mother-in-law occurred. The doctor in Buffalo had warned against the journey, and Olive wanted a physician's reassurance that no harm had been done. But Eliza Sternaman had not sent for a doctor. After a brief discussion, she agreed to call one in the next day.

When Dr. Phillip Park of Fisherville arrived the following morning, he insisted on being alone with his patient. He found George terribly emaciated, with a weak and rapid pulse. There were white patches and ulcers inside his mouth. His legs were paralyzed, and he could barely move his arms. After questioning him about his drinking habits, Park came to a horrifying conclusion: George was suffering from arsenic poisoning.

Outside the sick room, Dr. Park spoke to Olive, asking whether George had any enemies in Buffalo, anyone who might have given him a "poisonous draught". No, Olive told him, adding he was the first doctor to suggest poisoning.

Unwilling to trust his own judgement in a case with such serious implications, Park asked Olive if he might bring in another, more experienced physician, and suggested Dr. T.T.S. Harrison of Selkirk. Olive agreed to Harrison, who had once been the Sternaman family physician, was highly respected locally, and had recently served as the president of the Canadian Medical Association.

Dr. Harrison's diagnosis confirmed Park's. There was no doubt that George was suffering from arsenic poisoning, but Park's tests indicated that the poison had not been administered for some time. Park prescribed medicine that was supposed to clear arsenic from the system, but it was far too late. On 19 August George died. Later that day, Park and Harrison returned to perform one last grisly duty.

Several weeks earlier, George had requested an autopsy in the event of his death. One of the reasons he felt compelled to do so was the mysterious circumstances surrounding the demise of Olive's first husband, Ezra Elam Chipman, and the similarities between Chipman's and his own illness.

Like George, Chipman was a Canadian, a carpenter from St. Catharines. In Buffalo, he had worked hard, rose to the position of foreman, and, because he always brought his money home, was better off than many of his peers. In 1894, having met young George Sternaman on a construction site, Chipman invited him to board with the family.

The three adults got on quite well, even making trips to visit friends and relatives in southern Ontario together. Then, shortly before Christmas 1894 Elam Chipman fell ill on the job. Workmates saw him toss away an unfinished piece of pie. "I guess the old woman has seasoned it with cayenne pepper instead of spice," he joked. Soon, he was complaining, "My stomach is

Rose-Le Studio

Olive Sternaman: Victim of circumstance or black widow? This newspaper sketch of the accused was widely published during the trial.

burning to pieces." He was terribly thirsty, and began to vomit violently. Confined to bed, he eventually became paralyzed, and on 20 January 1895 died of "multiple neuritis". Many said he had been poisoned.

George's behaviour did not help quell the gossip. Olive kept Elam's photograph on an easel in the front parlour. Whenever George saw it, he would fly into a rage, insisting that it be covered. Although his mother tried to change his mind, he continued to live with Olive and her two sons. Soon he was courting the widow, and by September told his mother of his intentions to marry her. Eliza Sternaman was furious. "You'll be dead in six months," she warned.

Olive and George were married in Buffalo on 3 February 1896. In June, George took sick at work, just as Elam had done. A succession of doctors treated him, and, although George seemed to be mending at one point, by late July he was obviously failing. Around this time, the family's lack of income forced the move to Canada, where George succumbed to his illness.

Harrison and Park looked for arsenic in the autopsy. When their tests proved inconclusive Harrison suggested the cause of death be listed as mutiple neuritis arising from paralysis, the same symptoms which preceded Elam Chipman's death. He also recommended that the body be tampered with as little as possible. As he told undertaker John Snyder, they hadn't heard the last of the case.

While Snyder made the funeral arrangements, Eliza broached the subject of insurance. Until Olive and George were married, she had been the beneficiary of his insurance policies, but within days of the wedding, the policies had been changed in Olive's favour. Now, Eliza wanted to know how much insurance her daughter-in-law could expect, and when she would claim the money. Olive told her there were a few hundred dollars in the Carpenters' Union, but a second policy had been allowed to lapse. As for applying for the money, Olive told her mother-in-law, "My Ma has already done so."

As soon as the funeral was over, Olive returned to Buffalo with her two boys, where they all moved into the home of Elam's mother. In September, a letter from Eliza arrived. Since Olive had received the insurance money, Eliza felt justified in asking for $25. The money, she said, would cover the cost of feeding the couple during George's final days, as well as compensate his brothers, Avery and Freeman, for running errands. On the advice of friends, Olive ignored the letter, much to Eliza's annoyance.

In September, the minister of the Baptist Church, John Trickey, called on Eliza. He had received a request to supply a burial certificate to an American insurance company. Apparently, George had more insurance than Olive admitted to. For Eliza, this was the last straw. She called on C. W. Coulter, Haldimand County's crown attorney, explaining her suspicions. Coulter referred the matter to coroner David Thompson.

Thompson called an inquest into the death of George Sternaman. While Freeman Sternaman, John Snyder, and Doctors Park and Harrison looked on, George's body was exhumed and carried to Rainham Township Hall. There, Harrison and Park performed another autopsy, sealing several organs in glass bottles to ship to William Ellis, a University of Toronto chemistry professor who carried out forensic investigations for the provincial government. Park and Harrison also testified to their findings, the circumstances surrounding George's death, and the fact that the body had been remarkably well preserved.

Alerted to the mysterious goings-on in Haldimand County, provincial detective John Wilson Murray arrived on the scene. Strong, silent, stubborn and fearless, a contemporary described him as a "faithful friend and relentless foe". Those attributes served him well as a detective for the Ontario Police Force, which he joined in 1875.

Initially, Murray thought the suspicions against Olive were unfounded and that the case "would end in a fizzle". After some investigation, he changed his

Harry Sweet

George Sternaman: Carried home to die.

Harry Sweet

Eliza Sternaman: "You'll be dead in six months".

opinion, concluding Olive had poisoned both her husbands. Particularly damning was a letter written on 10 June 1896:

> To all whom it may concern,
>
> I, Geo. H. Sternaman having had very peculiar attacks at times during the past 6 mos and of which no one but my wife and a few of her relatives know anything of, write this to state that if I should die while in one of them that no person can say that it was by her hands in any way that I died. . . .

Murray pointed out the similarities between the handwriting in the letter and Olive's. Moreover, it was discovered that along with the insurance from the Carpenters' Union, George also had $1,770 insurance in other companies. Her deception about the insurance along with the circumstances of Elam's death and Dr. Ellis's discovery of arsenic in George's viscera convinced authorities to issue a warrant for Olive's arrest.

She was taken into custody in Buffalo on 27 October. Because George had died in Canada, Canadian authorities felt extradition was in order, and a hearing got under way. As doctors, insurance agents and others testified, Olive sat calmly in the Buffalo court room. At first, she seemed unconcerned, but as the hearing continued, she became more worried. On 17 November she "gave way to hysterical weeping" when her lawyer, Wallace Thayer, described George's death.

Still, she was sure she would be acquitted. On the morning of 4 December, looking calm and hopeful, she was escorted into the courtroom. Commissioner Fairchild read his decision:

> After a very careful examination and hearing of a great amount of testimony in this case . . . I deem the evidence herein sufficient to sustain the charge . . .

Olive half-rose in her chair, flushed and smiling. She — and others in the courtroom — had understood "here insufficient" but as Fairchild continued, the mistake became apparent. Her face fell, but she did not weep or protest.

Olive wanted to return to Canada to stand trial as soon as possible. Friends and her lawyer advised against it. In all likelihood, she was told, the trial would be at the Haldimand County Courthouse in Cayuga, where public feeling would be against her. As a consequence, the extradition order was appealed, first in New York State, and finally in Washington. Fairchild's decision stood. In the late summer of 1897, more than a year after George's death, John Murray escorted Olive to Cayuga.

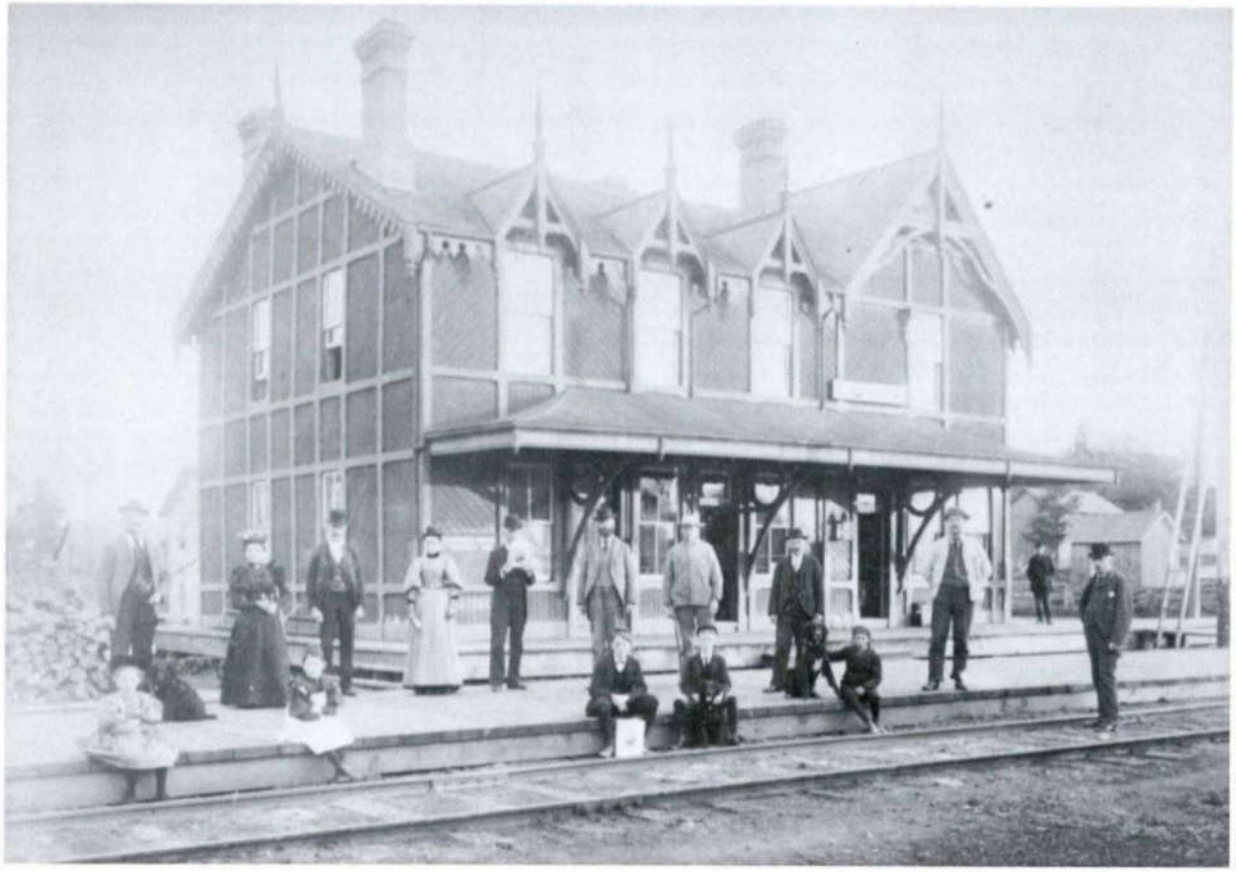
The trial began on 17 November with Judge Armour presiding. William Manley German, a Welland lawyer and politician, represented Olive. The crown prosecutor was Britton Bath Osler, older brother of the famous physician, William. "Brick" Osler was considered the best criminal lawyer of the day, a gifted orator and logical thinker who was frequently called on to protect the Crown's interests in civil and criminal trials.

Much of the evidence was already known to the spectators who jammed the Cayuga court house, for the proceedings of the extradition hearing had been widely publicized. A parade of doctors testified, including William Ellis, who made it clear that the body of George Sternaman had contained lethal quantities of arsenic. The crucial question was how had the poison got there? Neither John Snyder nor his son and apprentice Abraham were reliable witnesses. They claimed the body had not been embalmed, but both Olive's sister Lizzie and her aunt testified that Snyder had told them the cost of the funeral included the cost of embalming. John Chevalier of Selkirk told of meeting Snyder in Ivan W. Holmes' general store, where the undertaker boasted that the results of the inquest would depend on what he said in the witness box. When Chevalier asked if he had embalmed the body, Snyder replied, "We always embalm."

The evidence regarding insurance was most telling. There were three policies, and the agents who collected the premiums on a weekly basis claimed the money was invariably paid by Olive herself. Furthermore, she was extremely secretive about the policies. J. E. Dow, the insurance agent for John Hancock Mutual, said he met Olive on Dearborn Street in Buffalo. She was in mourning, and he stopped to ask about George's death. Olive told him a few details, then asked him not to say anything about the $1,000 life insurance policy. If her mother, father and sisters learned about it, she said, they would get it from her in a short time.

As Brick Osler himself admitted, all the evidence was circumstantial. But skillful presentation on the part of the Crown prosecutor quickly built the case against Olive, and her own behaviour helped cement the evidence in place. Although everyone, including her vindictive mother-in-law, agreed that she was a singularly devoted and affectionate wife to George,

Grand Trunk Railway station, Cayuga, circa, 1904. As Olive's execution approached, friends crowded the station telegraph office awaiting a reprieve from Ottawa.



Haldimand Country Museum/ Rose-Le Studio

Haldimand County Museum/ Rose-Le Studio

Haldimand County Courthouse, Cayuga, circa 1910. The jail yard where Olive was to hang is behind the wall to the right of the building.

they also testified to contradictory remarks she had made. Two of the Buffalo doctors who examined George told her they suspected poison, but she had not thought it necessary to mention the fact to Dr. Park after returning to Canada. And, although she sometimes gave way to weeping while in the Buffalo and Cayuga courtrooms, such displays of grief were exceptional. In fact, moments before her trial began, she was joking with women friends in the courtroom, and she usually sat placidly listening to evidence as though it had no power to affect her. For some, this was proof of her coldblooded and murderous nature.

William German did what he could to lessen the impact of the evidence. In his summing up, he argued that unless Olive was a "fiend from hell" she had no motive for murdering George, nor, for that matter, her first husband. Both men had brought in good wages, and the profits from the insurance were minimal.

Osler presented his final arguments, then Judge Armour made his charge to the jury. The twelve men, most of whom were farmers, left to consider the evidence at 4:40 pm. Four hours later, they filed back into the room. "Your Lordship," the jury foreman asked, "what power have we as to any recommendation to mercy?"

"You can recommend to mercy if you think fit," Armour replied.

Olive was sent for. Pale but calm, she arrived from the jail and took her place in the dock.

The court was heavily shadowed, lit only by a few smoking lamps. Judge Armour sat in the glare of one, while Olive was half hidden in the gloom. The jury foreman walked from the box and handed the verdict to the judge. Armour unfolded the paper. "Gentlemen of the jury," he cried, "hearken to your verdict as the court records it, a verdict of guilty, so say you all."

Some women in the gallery moaned. Others strained to watch as Armour ordered Olive to stand. "What have you to say that the sentence of the court should not be pronounced upon you?"

Pale but still controlled, Olive rose. "I am not guilty." Her voice was clear, as she looked at the judge she hesitated, then continued. "In the eyes of God I will have a new trial and be acquitted."

Sternly, Armour told her she had had a fair trial, then passed sentence: "That you be taken hence to the place whence you came, and that you be thence taken on Thursday, the twentieth of January next, to the place of execution, and that you be there hanged by

the neck until you are dead." His voice quavered. "And may the Lord have mercy on your soul."

A female spectator fainted. Another cried out, while Olive protested, "Oh judge, is there no justice in this country?" Jailer John Murphy and Chief Constable Farrell led her back to the cell.

It had been more than twenty years since a woman had been executed in Ontario, and many were opposed. By the next night, a petition had been started asking that Olive be granted a new trial. Among the signatures were those of several members of the jury, who publicly stated that they would not have convicted if they had known Olive would receive a death sentence.

Among Olive's most outspoken advocates were a journalist, Phillips Thompson, and a minister, John G. Foote. A socialist and champion of the working class, Thompson interviewed Olive for newspapers and conducted a campaign in her favour through letters to the editor. (Thompson's grandson, Pierre Berton, would later carry on the family's journalistic tradition.)

Reverend Foote, Cayuga's Methodist minister, had visited Olive regularly during her confinement, and was convinced of her innocence. In conversations and letters to newpapers, he pushed for a new trial. In December, the case was appealed at Osgoode Hall, Toronto, but the verdict was upheld. There seemed little hope; however William German prepared to make a final appeal to Ottawa.

Foote accompanied him. Together, they called on David Mills, only recently appointed Minister of Justice. A scholarly man from London, Mills was an expert on constitutional law who had taught at the University of Toronto. He promised to consider the case carefully. With a committee of fellow cabinet ministers, he reviewed the facts, then presented it to the cabinet as a whole. Mills had two options: he could commute Olive's sentence to life imprisonment, or grant a new trial. After a daylong discussion with the cabinet, he chose the latter option, the first time this was ever done under a new clause in the Criminal Code.

Word reached Cayuga on 18 January 1898. Hangman Radcliffe had just arrived, and the scaffold was being erected in the jail yard when Olive learned the news. Overwhelmed at first, she soon recovered. Her belief that she would be granted a new trial had been vindicated; now, she was convinced, it was only a matter of time before she was proved innocent.

The public interest generated by the trial and death sentence continued. In Buffalo, there were accusations that the Canadian trial had been unfair. In Canada, Olive's supporters argued that, since the government had virtually limitless funds at its disposal, it was able to hire the best lawyers. Olive, who was practically destitute, had to rely on charity. A fund was started to pay for her defence, with groups of supporters banding together in Haldimand County, in Buffalo and

Harry Sweet

Olive Sternaman, circa 1930.

Toronto to raise the $500 required.

The second trial got underway in May. Again, Osler represented the Crown. Chancellor John Boyd presided, and Olive's new defence attorney was E.F.B. Johnston of Toronto. A prominent criminal lawyer, Johnston was Osler's chief rival. The two had locked horns at several murder trials, and, in the last two instances, Johnston had won.

In Cayuga, Johnston deftly persuaded witnesses to express doubts about what they had seen or heard, effectively weakening the evidence against Olive. Late on the evening of 7 May the jury brought in a verdict of not guilty.

The courtroom broke into shouting and cheers. Moments later, as the noise subsided, Boyd ordered Olive to rise. She was flushed and crying, so overcome she could barely stand. Once outside the courtroom, though, she recovered enough to give brief interviews to reporters before her family swept her away to some much-needed privacy in Rainham Township.

But Olive's acquittal was not the end of her ordeal. Although she told some reporters that she had no intention of touching the insurance companies' "dirty money," she had little choice. She had aready signed papers agreeing to pay Wallace Thayer and William German's fees from the policies. So, as soon as she returned to Buffalo, she launched a lawsuit against

Metropolitan Life. It was quickly dismissed on the grounds that George Sternaman had misrepresented the condition of his health to the company doctor. Wallace Thayer launched an appeal, and a series of courtroom battles began. On the one hand, the company argued that Olive had no claim on the insurance money, since she had been convicted of murder. On the other, her lawyer argued, she had been exonerated. After five trials, the case was finally settled in 1905. Olive got the $1,000, plus costs, all of which went to her lawyers.

Shortly after she regained her freedom, Olive married her third husband. According to one story, the man complained of intestinal problems one day after dinner. Fully aware of his wife's past, he warned her that if he ever felt ill again after eating a meal she had prepared he would kill her himself. They were divorced a short time later.

Olive eventually resumed the name of her first husband and slipped into obscurity. By the time she died in 1941 most people had forgotten the notorious Sternaman poisoning case. But one question was never answered: how did George die? There is little doubt that arsenic was responsible, but how — and by whom — was it administered? Assuming that Olive was innocent, two theories from the murder trials suggest possible answers. The first was accidental poisoning. One of the medications George received contained traces of arsenic; an error by a doctor or pharmacist might have turned those "traces" into a deadly dosage.

However, accidental poisoning ignores the fact of Elam Chipman's death. Circumstantial evidence presented at the trials proved that Olive had the motive, means and opportunity to murder both husbands. However, George Sternaman had the same means and opportunity. As for motive, Olive's mother and sister testified that George became infatuated with Olive while Elam was still alive, and his violent reaction to Elam's photograph suggests jealousy or a guilty conscience. Furthermore, one of the doctors testified George was nervous, excitable, neurotic. Olive spoke of the spells George suffered when he was angry and upset, when he would sit for hours at a time, staring and unresponsive. Once, when George was in one of these spells, she muttered, "Merciful God, if Elam could know I married George and he had these fits he would wish him dead a dozen times."

Was Olive Sternaman an innocent victim of circumstance or a Victorian black widow? No one will ever know for certain. ♦

Cheryl MacDonald of Nanticoke, Ontario, is the author of "Emma Albani: Victorian Diva" (Dundurn Press 1984) and "Adelaide Hoodless: Domestic Crusader" (Dundurn Press 1986).

Arsenic

Arsenic has long had a sinister reputation as an instrument of murder, possibly because it is so easy to administer to the victim. The form of arsenic favoured by poisoners is arsenious oxide or "white arsenic", which in one of its forms is white and opaque like flour and almost tasteless, making it easy to mix with food.

The usual results of arsenic in the human body are degeneration of the lining of the digestive tract and of the tissues of other internal organs, and probably also a direct attack on nerve tissue. The resulting symptoms include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, headache and muscular pains. When larger doses have been administered death usually results within a period ranging from several hours to several days. According to the *Britannica*, a dose of 0.2 grams has caused death, although somewhat larger quantities have been taken without fatal result.

Chronic arsenical poisoning occurs when small quantities are absorbed over a long period of time. Here the gastro-intestinal symptoms may be slight, and other symptoms, such as gradual loss of weight, skin rashes and pigmentation may occur. Arsenic is retained by the body and can be detected in bodily secretions, in finger nails and in hair.

Derivatives of arsenic can be used in medication in certain conditions. An old treatment for syphilis called for the use of an arsenic derivative and a similar medication was used in cases of sleeping sickness.

The presence of traces of arsenic in a cadaver is not always an indication that murder has taken place. Arsenic could have been ingested as part of medication and there have been cases in which people have been poisoned by arsenic present in the soil in the area in which they live or accidentally by arsenic contained in paint and other household preparations.

Speculation has persisted over the years that the Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte was poisoned with arsenic during his last days in exile on the remote island of St. Helena.

In the year 1817, Napoleon began to complain of indigestion and swellings in his legs. Traces of arsenic have been found in strands of hair said to have been taken from Napoleon's head after death. The emperor himself complained shortly before he expired at 52 in 1821 that he was dying before his time, murdered by Hudson Lowe, Governor of St. Helena, and his minions.

The arsenic that may have killed Napoleon could have come from paint that was used to decorate his house on the island or it may have been administered by his own physician. We shall probably never know.

Secret Trains Across Canada 1917-1918

By Elizabeth A. Tancock

In January of 1917 Britain and France negotiated a contract with the Chinese Government in Peking to supply men to work behind the lines in France and Belgium as railway and general labour, but not to fight as members of the military forces. The task of fulfilling the contract fell to Canada. From early March of that year to late March 1918, this country carried out a monumental undercover military operation and did it so secretly that today's history books contain no detailed references to the undertaking, and probably no more than half a dozen of the personnel involved are alive today to tell of their role in the drama. The Department of National Defence has only one file on the subject in its Directorate of History. The last page of that file is rubber-stamped twice with the word "declassified", once with the date "Jan 22 1985", and a second time with "Jun (or Jul?) 1986."

The logical route for transporting these men to Europe would have been by way of the Panama Canal, which had been opened in 1914. However, although President Wilson was calling for a declaration of war against Germany in 1917 (a resolution passed the Senate on 4 April and the House of Representatives on the 6th), the United States was unprepared for war, with few trained men and little equipment. Passage through the canal therefore had to be ruled out. Consequently the Imperial authorities asked Canada's Department of National Defence to be responsible for bringing the workers by ship to Vancouver, transporting them across Canada, and putting them on board ships for a trans-Atlantic crossing to the war zone.

The Canadian Government accepted the challenge. In doing so officials probably never envisioned the proportions the task would eventually assume, but simply felt confident that the Canadian Pacific Railway and its steamship lines had the necessary equipment and expertise. The Dominion of Canada Immigration

Sir Robert Borden authorized the moving of Chinese labourers through Canada under the utmost secrecy. Was it to ensure military security or were the authorities worried about racial incidents in a nation that was then often hostile to Asian people?

Department agreed to allow the Chinese workers to cross Canada without payment of the usual poll tax of $500, but on condition that they would be carefully guarded to prevent escape, and that five copies of a list giving serial numbers, names, and ages be prepared before the ships arrived in Vancouver. One of these copies would be for the United States Immigration Department to cover the trains going through the State of Maine to St. John or Halifax when the Port of Montreal was closed during the winter months. The Americans required also that all car doors be locked and a guard be posted inside each door during passage.

The Department of Defence in Ottawa was well aware of the necessity for secrecy in this large-scale operation at the height of hostilities. It issued detailed instructions for the formation and operation of a unit to be supplied by the Department and to be designated "Railway Service Guard" with no reference to Chinese coolies. It was to be composed of picked and reliable men suited for such work, with preference being given to any over-age or returned officers and, if possible, from the military districts of Vancouver and Victoria in order to save on transportation. Four guards were to be supplied for each car carrying the Chinese, and for each train there were to be two spare guards, two

non-commissioned officers (sergeants), two commissioned officers (lieutenants), and one captain. The men were to be divided between two shifts, with the commissioned officers arranging hours on duty. The guards were issued obsolete Ross rifles equipped with bayonets but no ammunition. Each train was to be supplied with an interpreter.

Secrecy necessitated too the use of code for many of the telegrams sent between the military and the railway. A typical one read:

Ottawa, Ontario, April 23/17

O C, M D No 11,
Victoria BC

Agone twenty three H forty eight stop Unaffect Empress of Asia essayeur thornyclam maronion tracery wholsomer whelpmore censorlike bescribble.

Adjt General

and translated as:

With reference to my letter 18th April *Empress of Asia* expected at Vancouver Island May 3rd with about 2,406 Chinese coolies on board.

Another one read:

Ottawa, Ont April 21st/17

OC, M D LL,
Victoria BC

Agone twenty H forty five stop Special canecase pluvimetro cranelifts clifapink tollbar with censorlike resolvatis calcayosta stop Engrossing obsonia that castorbean calcealid censings are shellfrost facebale inertly to foulfaced these metrically foxhunting geotrawler stop Lightable crisomira and itkeeping interleave playthings hemicraney offastate and corroding maivogel larchvine stop Copy of this message sent inhived topsoiling calcavamos.

Adjutant General

It decoded as:

Special care must be taken to prevent coolies communicating with Chinese coolies resident in Canada stop. Evidence has been obtained that certain Canadian Chinese are spreading absolutely false information to frighten these men from going over stop Copy of this message sent Inspector General Canada.

Adjutant General

In bringing the Chinese across the Pacific, the Canadian Government used at least thirteen Canadian Pacific liners and two of the American Dollar Line. Two of the Empress ships carried the largest numbers. Departures alternated between the two ports: Wei-Hai-Wei, about 300 miles east of Peking, and Tsingtau on the Yellow Sea; late in the year there was a sailing from Hong Kong. As closely as one can estimate from correspondence in the National Defence file, more than 84,000 Chinese crossed Canada in the thirteen-month period.

PACIFIC TRANSPORT RECORDS

Name of Ship	Number of Consignments	Number of Men
Empress of Russia	6	13,575
Empress of Asia	6	14,096
Empress of Japan	5	4,726
Monteagle	4	6,485
Bessie Dollar	3	5,140
Coconada	3	7,140
Teesta	3	6,960
Harold Dollar	2	3,560
Ision	2	6,040
Protesilaus	1	3,000
Kaipeing	1	1,042
Tamar	1	3,240
Talthybius	1	3,240
Antilochus	1	3,000
Tyndareus	1	3,000
		84,244

Despite this tabulation, the British Empire War Office gave the figure of 107,481 Chinese working in France on Armistice Day. The men were operating in the British Armies and on the Lines of Communication, serving as bricklayers, millwrights, carpenters, plumbers, railway maintenance crewmen, blacksmiths, port construction workers, boilermakers and riveters, electricians, tailors, shoemakers, and unskilled labourers.

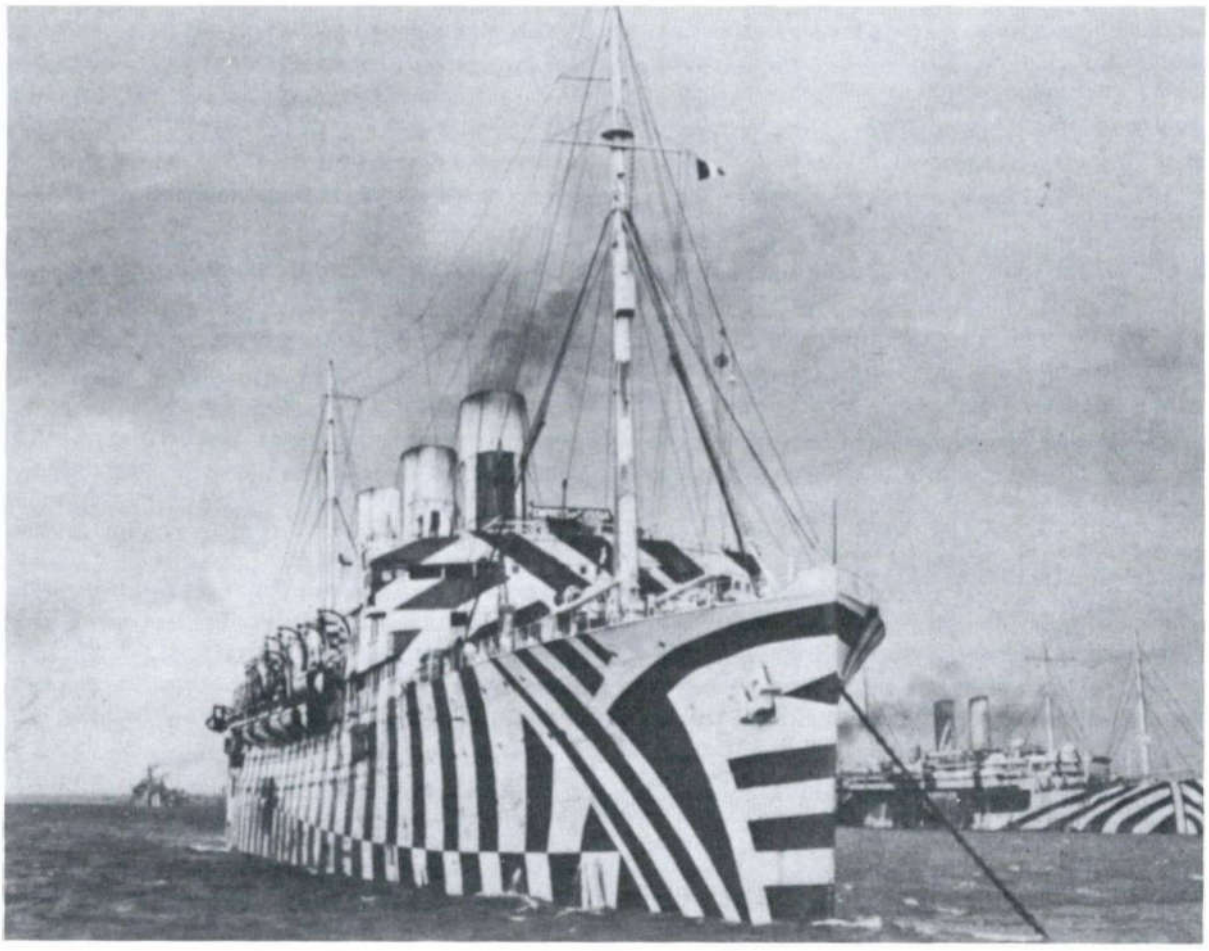
The projects for which the Chinese work force was needed were ascertained through the French local authorities.

The Chinese were medically inspected before leaving China, and were under medical supervision aboard the ships. Still, they were required to pass quarantine at William Head, near Victoria, before proceeding to Vancouver. There they were brought ashore and ushered into the old immigration sheds on the waterfront. At this time the five copies of the personnel lists were distributed: one was given to the senior Militia officer in charge of the consignment on the train, who was to deliver it to the CPR representative on arrival at the Eastern port; a second copy was surrendered to the Dominion Immigration Agent in Vancouver; and a third was kept by the General Passenger Agent of the CPR in Vancouver. The remaining two copies were sent to the Assistant General Passenger Agent in Montreal who would pass along one of them to the United States Commissioner of Immigration in that city for the trains going through the State of Maine. This done, the men boarded the waiting trains for the long journey that would take them through Calgary, Winnipeg, Fort William, Sudbury, North Bay, and Ottawa.

These trains were assembled with great care. Each was made up of four baggage cars for stores and implements, one baggage car for food supplies and Dining Car Department requirements, eleven colonist cars, and an equipped tourist car for the use of the guards, other military personnel, and a few railway representatives. Seventeen cars constituted the load limits for these trains, but for every 1,000 men Peking sent 250 tons of "stores and implements". The latter were probably cooking and eating utensils. Since the capacity load of a baggage car was thirty tons, other cars had to be loaded and pulled by regular trains. To make it possible for one tourist car to serve the large group assigned to it, the General Passenger Agent laid down explicit directives for accommodations: a lower berth was to be allotted to each of the four military officers, the passenger agent, the dining car steward, and the porter; seven lowers were available for twenty-eight guards, on a double and "continuous occupancy" basis — in other words, fourteen each shift, as they would be on duty twelve hours of each twenty-four; one upper

The presence of Asian men in the European theatre of battle made the Great War a "world" conflict.

The "Empress of Russia", part of the Canadian Pacific fleet, was one of the ships that transported Chinese labourers to Canada enroute to the front. Here it is camouflaged for a later role as a troopship on the Atlantic.



berth was reserved for the dining car chief cook; and nine uppers were available for eighteen guards, "one guard to each upper, continuous occupation".

Colonist and tourist cars differed in several respects. The former, occupied by the Chinese, were originally designed to carry emigrants from Europe to Western Canada. They had twelve upper and lower berths on each side, and cooking and sanitary facilities. There were no partitions between the sections and no curtains on the aisles. For these special trains the lavatory windows were fastened down, and strong screens were placed on the outside completely covering the windows. The tourist cars were sectioned off by partitions, and provided with curtains on the aisles and softer seats than those in the colonist cars.

A reading of the complete contents of the Department of Defence file — memoranda, letters, and telegrams — gives the impression that the railway department heads shouldered the greatest part of the work involved, and one wonders whether they were even given special recognition. Passenger agents had to not only work out the number of trains required for each consignment and have the rolling stock on hand on the day of the ship's arrival, if possible, but had to do so on *expected* dates of arrival and sometimes on short notice. The dining car department head in Vancouver was required to have ready provisions and cooks for each car of men, and different fare and a chef for the military personnel car. Fortunately for the latter, a uniform meal was supplied for all ranks. The dining car representative had to keep records of meals supplied and send these lists to Montreal for reimbursement by the Department of Militia and Defence. Also for billing purposes, the traffic vice-president had to keep track of the numbers of Chinese, guards, and other military personnel carried, and of the types of sleeping accommodation occupied.

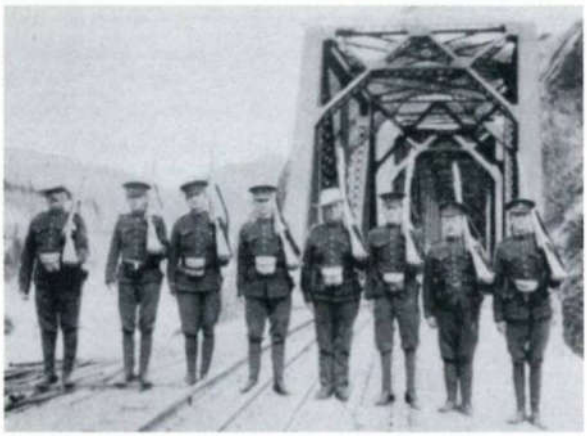
Understandably, National Defence records made no comments on the men. Donald C. McKechnie, a retired mining engineer living in Vancouver, says that the men on the train to which he and the late D.M. (Pinky) Morrison were assigned as guards in early May 1917 were noticeably larger men than the Cantonese with whom Vancouverites were familiar. The train's interpreter told him that these men were from Manchuria which, at that time and during the 300-year rule of the Manchu Government, was part of China. (In the 1920s the Japanese took over Manchuria, but after World War II the area reverted to Chinese control. Later it came under the Communist regime at Peking.)

Mr. McKechnie tells of other interesting sidelights. He says that every morning two Chinese from each car were taken forward to the food supply in one of the baggage cars, where they loaded up with sufficient quantities for the day. This always seemed to consist of a good deal of cabbage, but no doubt it included rice and some fish. It was routine too that every time a train stopped, one of the guards from each car had to get off and patrol two coaches to see that no Chinese escaped. It was a precaution that seemed to Mr. McKechnie quite superfluous — the men gave no indication of being interested in venturing into what would probably have been a hostile environment; and besides, they were having a good time aboard, and especially enjoyed being fed. This impression was confirmed when, at the end of the journey, the Manchurians bade goodbye to the guards with smiles and handshakes as they walked between their security lines toward the ships waiting for the Atlantic crossing.

Transporting thousands of men across this vast country was no small undertaking, and not unexpectedly there were times when problems loomed large. Staffing was a constant worry, starting with supplying medical officers for the ships on the Pacific crossings and sometimes for the trains, and mustering the fifty or so guards needed for each train. After continuous train travel for the twelve or fourteen days of a return trip the members of the Railway Service Guard needed two or three days off between assignments. Some of the guards were recruited from the Home Guard and were over age; and some of that group became ill, even to the point of having to be left off for hospitalization along the way. Frequently when large numbers of men were passing through the West Coast ports it became necessary to employ civilian "practitioners", as they were called.

Another problem that arose frequently was the holding of large numbers of men when two consignments arrived within a day or so of each other. It was on one such occasion that the Brigade Major in Vancouver suggested to his Commanding Officer that all Chinese be landed at William Head, the immigration and sanitary inspection station five miles southwest of downtown Victoria, where they could be held in a camp if necessary. He suggested too that there be a similar camp set up at the Eastern port, and proposed that the Railway Service Guard Headquarters be moved to William Head. He added that if these proposals were adopted the Guard then on hand could handle from 10,000 to 11,000 men a month. Yet, two months after a holding camp was established at William Head, there were still occasional difficulties. In one instance Inspector-General G.A. Walton asked whether one of the large consignments could be held at Petawawa, but the Officer Commanding at Victoria recommended that all holding be done at William Head. Then, a day or two later, just such arrangements had to be made.

There were many small problems, too. For instance, what could have been behind a request from a Captain Brutton to the Officer Commanding in Vancouver for "nineteen hundred and ninety-one pairs of service



Special troops were mustered to accompany the sealed trains and to guard railway property.

boots"? A somewhat serious concern was reported by Brigadier-General Leckie at the William Head Quarantine Station, who said that they were having a great deal of difficulty boiling rice for the coolies. He asked H.W. Brodie, the CPR General Passenger Agent, whether the boilers used on the ships could be transferred to the camp. Mr. Brodie explained that they could not, that they were part of the galley equipment and were attached to the steam pipes, so that actually the rice was steamed on the ships. Col. Leckie then telephoned the Immigration Building and learned that the Chinese cooks there used a special shallow dish with a high cover; also that there had been occasions on the trains when bread had been substituted for rice, and if necessary such a step could be taken at William Head.

On 28 February 1918, a confidential memorandum from Colonel C.S. MacInnes, acting Adjutant General in the Department of Militia and Defence, instructed the Officer Commanding, District No. 11 in Victoria, to be prepared to disband the Railway Service Guard at an early date; that the War Cabinet had issued instructions that the coolie movement was to be stopped with no more men being brought from China after the two consignments already on the way. At the time of negotiating the contract with Peking, the British and French Governments had agreed to return the labourers to China after the War, and to pay the Peking Government $1,000 U.S. for any man not returned. After the cessation of hostilities, Mr. McKechnie heard that fortunately, and perhaps surprisingly, there were very few Chinese casualties.

It was 5 September 1919, when the first instructions were issued for the repatriation of the Chinese Labour Corps through Canada. A detail to be known as the "Special Guard" comprising nineteen officers and 600 men was to be organized by the Canadian Military Police Corps under Lt.-Col. Ross Napier in Halifax. All recruits for the Special Guard were to be returned men from overseas, and enlistment was to be carried out in Halifax, Montreal, and Toronto, for a period of employment of six to eight months. Members of the Guard were equipped with revolvers, presumably loaded, and given explicit directions for their stations on the trains and on their patrols during stops. They were instructed not to interfere with the Chinese Imperial Army Officers commanding the men, but only to ensure that no Chinese left the trains except in case of illness, and then only under escort of local authorities. However, if a train's Medical Officer felt that exercise was necessary, arrangements could be made for an exercise march, when and where convenient.

Cars were carefully sealed and guarded for the long journey across Canada on CPR trains.

Military files dealing with the repatriation trains contain no coded telegrams and no mandates for secrecy. Yet, how many Canadians have ever heard of them? ♦

Elizabeth A. Tancock lives in Islington, Ontario, and conducted research for this article in recently declassified files at the Department of National Defence, Ottawa, and at the National Archives of Canada.

THE ASYLUM AT ORILLIA

The Dark Side Of Mariposa

By Joan Morris and Virginia Hartley

Huronia Regional Centre, consisting of massive, red-brick Victorian buildings and a motley collection of outbuildings and old houses, stands on 580 acres of Lake Simcoe shoreline in Orillia, Ontario, its presence a reminder of an era when mentally retarded people were segregated in custodial care.

Over its 130 years of existence, the population of the Centre has reached as high as 3,000 handicapped persons (in the 1960s when it was called the Ontario Hospital School, Orillia). Today, in accordance with an Ontario government plan designed to lead to closing the centre within 20 years, the population has dwindled to around 700.

The institution, named the Orillia Lunatic Asylum for Chronic Patients when it opened its doors in 1861, was part of a general movement in Canada that sought to find more humane ways to treat the poor, the mentally afflicted, the sick and the aged.

In 1839 the House of Assembly of Upper Canada passed "An Act to Authorize the Erection of an Asylum within this province for the Reception of Insane and Lunatic Persons". Although mentally retarded people, who were then called "idiots", were not mentioned in this legislation, many found their way into the asylum when it opened in 1841 in an old jail in Toronto. In 1850 the asylum moved to new quarters on Queen Street. Because it had been built in the hope that in this new facility "insane persons" could be cured, the mentally retarded, considered incurable, were not welcome. Many arriving there had been fobbed off by outlying towns, where they had often been housed in jails.

The asylum soon became overcrowded, and other places were sought for the "incurables". A branch of the asylum was opened by the government in 1857 on the grounds of the University of Toronto; then in 1859 another branch opened at Amherstburg, followed by yet another in Orillia in 1861.

The town of Orillia (Stephen Leacock's "Mariposa"), lying between two lakes, Couchiching to the north and Simcoe to the south, was an attraction for tourists even in the mid-1800s, and indirectly it was the hope of an entrepreneur, Henry Frazer, to provide accommodation for these tourists that led Orillia into the asylum business. The hotel that Frazer began to build proved too ambitious an undertaking for him, and the unfinished building was purchased in 1859 by the government for use as an asylum.

This purchase was prompted in part by a letter from a group of "freeholders and inhabitants of Orillia", written in 1858 to politician Angus Morrison, begging him to "have the goodness to press on the government the desirableness of Orillia". They presented their case in this way:

> When we consider the salubrity of its climate, the beauty of the scenery by which it is surrounded, the plentiful supply of kitchen meat and farm produce in the neighbourhood, the quietness which belongs to the place, we believe it would be difficult to find anywhere in Canada more favourably situated.

By 1861 the transformation of the hotel to an asylum was completed at a cost of $18,135. Bars covered

Photo by Stephen Dyck

The asylum as it is today, shorn of its bell-top cupola, its finials and spire. Its function as an institution for the retarded is gradually being phased out.

the three tiers of verandas facing Lake Couchiching, and behind the bars were housed approximately 150 retarded people of adult age. As the superintendent, Dr. F. Ardagh, wrote in his report of 1862:

> The general effect of the building is dignified and imposing; the projecting wings, bay windows, and high roof, all convey an idea of magnitude, and a complete absence of all the usual characters so common in the architecture of asylums and hospitals.

Dignified and imposing it may have been, but the converted hotel proved inadequate as a facility for the mentally retarded: it was closed in 1870, and then refurbished and reopened in 1876. The 1876 reopening was largely the result of politicking: the people of Orillia looked on the asylum as a source of money and employment.

When the first of the new group of 44 inmates arrived in Orillia on 25 September 1876 via the Northern Railway several hundred citizens turned out to view them. The event was written up in the local newspaper.

Within ten years the buildings were judged too old to undergo further repair or improvement. In 1885 one hundred and fifty-six acres were purchased for $6,545.25 on the Lake Simcoe side of Orillia as the site of the new Orillia Asylum for Idiots. The rural site, two miles from the town limits, was chosen to isolate the residents from the town and also to further the hope that a rural setting with its agricultural possibilities would give therapeutic work to the inmates and allow the institution to become self-sufficient.

The Ontario Government commissioned Kivas Tully, Chief Architect and Engineer for the Public Works Department, to design the buildings. Tully was associated with the building of several well-known Ontario structures, such as Trinity College in Toronto in 1852 and Victoria Hall in Cobourg in 1860, as well as other Ontario asylums.

The Orillia Asylum opened in an incomplete state in 1887. The previous year the gas works of the asylum had been built and the service area housing the kitchen and the laundry was begun. The boys' dormitory, called a "cottage" although it was a three-storey brick structure with large verandas, was completed in 1887 and in February of the following year the girls' "cottage" was ready for use.

The large, red-brick main building with a rubble-stone foundation was started in 1889 and completed in 1891. It was elaborately designed with a 14-foot spire, turret-like pinnacles and an attractive roof-line consisting of a bell-top cupola, dormers, finials, triangular pediments and large Victorian chimney stacks.

Commemorative cup, circa 1890, from the collection of Joan Morris.

The institutional Christmas card for 1912. Over the years the terminology used to describe mentally impaired children has changed and is still changing.

This building served as the core of the completed asylum. At the front — gently rolling lawns went down to the shores of Lake Simcoe. The lay-out of the gardens and paths indicated the orientation of the asylum toward the lake and the railway, which were the main means of access for visitors from the south. The terracing and planting of the gardens were completed in 1894; the majority of the work had been done by the inmates.

Within the main building services and accommodation for the children and quarters for the administration were located. The ground floor was designed for teaching purposes "whereby feeble-minded children could be trained and improved, so far as their physical imperfections would permit". The sleeping quarters and sitting rooms for these children were located on the next two floors. In addition to the administrative offices there was an amusement hall which could seat 1,000 people.

The cottages, standing to the side of the main building, housed the "custodial cases", those men, women and children who, it was thought, were unable to benefit from training or to care for themselves.

Farmland lay to the back of the main buildings. Stables, a piggery, straw sheds, a farm implement building, an ice house, coal sheds, a root cellar and a barn were constructed on this land.

Staff houses were built a short distance from the farm in 1889 and 1891. A still-existing stone farmhouse, believed to have been built in 1844, was first used as quarters for the workmen constructing the new buildings and then converted to a staff house. Dr. Beaton, superintendent of the asylum from the second opening in 1876 through to 1910, commented in his report to the Inspector of Asylums in 1891:

> For the proper working of the institution, all the officers, and the principal employees should live either in, or near the buildings, and not in the town two miles away — and to secure this end cottages should be erected on the grounds for such as have families. The officers, especially, should be within immediate reach of the Asylum in case an emergency should require their presence. Nor is it reasonable to have departments locked up and the keys two miles away.
>
> A few thousand dollars spent in erecting cottages on the ground on the opposite side of the public road would be money well expended and I would recommend that such be done at an early date.

(These staff houses, now used as short-term training homes for residents ready to move into the community, have been designated Heritage Buildings by the Ontario government. Of particular historical significance is the original stone house, one of the very few buildings for residential use constructed of cut stone in the Simcoe County area.)

Dr. A. H. Beaton, a shrewd, caring and far-sighted Scotsman, had a profound influence on the growth of the asylum. The Orillia *Times* in 1889 paid this tribute to him: "Long may he rule over the Ontario Government's happy but unfortunate family in the big house on the wave-washed shore of Lake Simcoe".

Dr. Beaton was faced with a constantly growing demand for the services of his facility, a demand he had foreseen even before the new buildings were opened. In 1886, in his Annual Report to Dr. W. T. O'Reilly, the Inspector of Asylums, Dr. Beaton wrote:

> The new buildings will not be ready for several months yet, and from what I have already stated it will be seen how far they come short of meeting the immediate wants of the country; so it is absolutely necessary that more accommodation should be provided at once, and I would strongly recommend that the main building be proceeded with without delay.

Dr. Beaton, despite his concern over the need for more accommodation for the residents, had praise for the new asylum:

> Our farm, the building site, and all the surroundings, including our magnificent water supply of the purest spring water, are all the most exacting critic or specialist could demand . . . The outlook is charming, the drainage will be perfect and the water is of the purest — three of the principal requisites for insuring good health.

The people of Orillia seemed to agree with him: in the August 1887 edition of the Orillia *Times*, there was this praise for the new asylum: ". . . for solidity, light, and convenience the buildings are not excelled on the Continent . . . All about the buildings have been constructed with a view to strength and safety, and second, with a view to comfort and convenience . . ."

Life within the institution, however, had its grim side. There is a Dickensian tone to some comments in letters from Dr. Beaton to Dr. Lanmuir, Inspector of Asylums.

In one letter in 1877, Dr. Beaton wrote:

> An inmate of this institution is dying. I'm afraid that he escaped from the keeper and was out all night, a very cold rainy night.

and in another:

The institution's dairy, no longer in use, formed part of the once-extensive agricultural component.

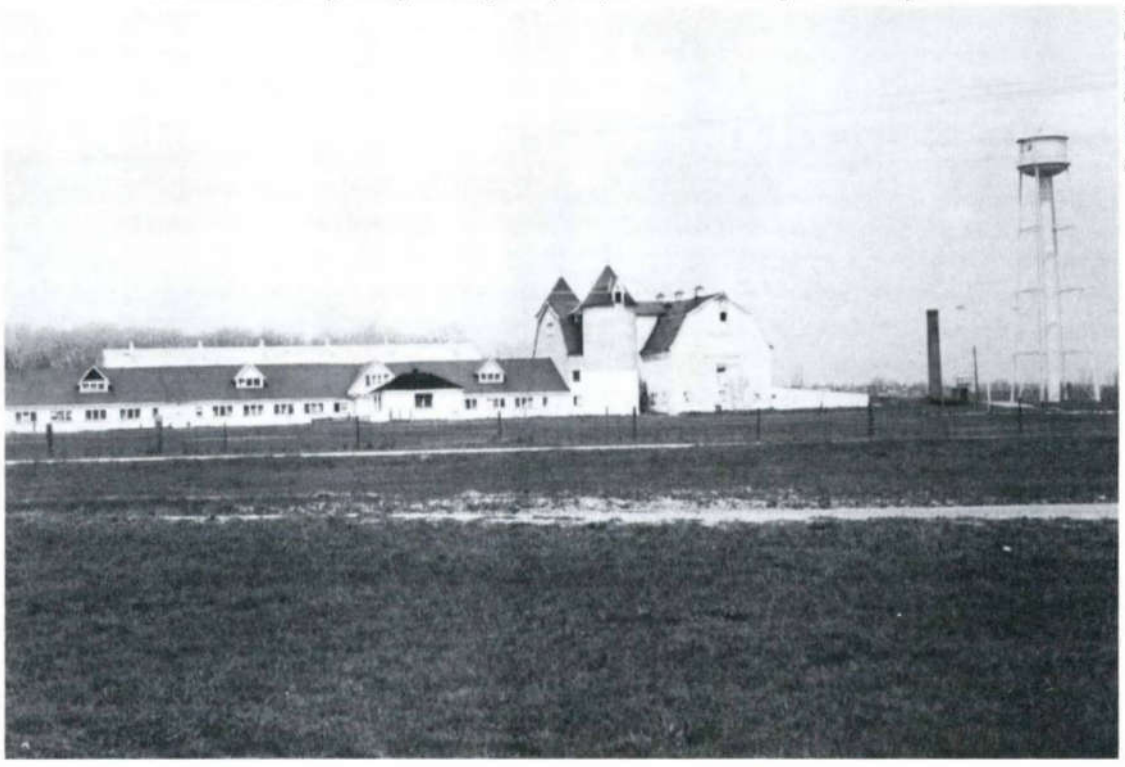


Photo by Stephen Dyck

I have the honour to inform that _____, an idiot transferred from east of Algoma to the Asylum for the Insane London and from thence to the Asylum for Idiots, Orillia, died in the last named institution from consumption".

Associated with the dark side was the need for a burial ground. It was inconspicuously located across the road from the main buildings, close to the farm. Flat markers, still clearly visible, engraved only with case numbers, identify the remains of the residents. Symbolic of the changing attitudes toward people with mental handicaps and in stark contrast to the plain anonymous markers, is a large monument, erected in 1989, which is dedicated to all of those "cases" buried in the plot, more than 2,000 of them.

One of Beaton's greatest contributions was his attempt to establish Canada's first training school for "feeble-minded" children at the Orillia Asylum. Dr. Beaton tried to start a program in 1887 that would help the children to be "improved in intelligence and habits". He failed to get support from the government and in 1902 the program ceased temporarily to operate. An arch-conservative political group, the Patrons of Industry, who felt that it was useless, unnecessarily expensive and potentially dangerous to educate the feeble-minded, proved highly influential.

However, by 1904, Dr. Beaton again had a training department in which the children were taught singing, sewing, and did kindergarten and primary school work.

In 1910 Dr. Beaton left the care of the institution and its residents to Mr. J. P. Downey, a man with no training in medicine or psychology but with good political connections. Mr. Downey was to remain for the next 16 years, functioning as a business administrator rather than the visionary advocate Dr. Beaton had been.

Mr. Downey was given the government's blessing to enlarge the hospital and build new facilities: he had the co-operation and approval of the authorities that Dr. Beaton seems to have lacked.

Downey purchased an additional 279 acres of land to enhance the farm operation, and all the farm buildings were moved there. This enabled him to not only supply the asylum with produce, but also to sell the surplus to other facilities.

The overcrowding that Beaton constantly complained about was temporarily eased by the construction of two residences. Most of the construction work on these two buildings was done by the male patients, and the mill work was supplied by the prisoners within the provincial reform system.

A new fire hall, a sewage plant, a laundry building, a kitchen addition and a staff house for the medical director were completed under Downey's supervision. The asylum was increasingly becoming a self-contained, self-sufficient unit, and Downey was closer to achieving his goal of making ". . . our institution one of the largest and most modern on this continent".

By 1920 the population of the Orillia Hospital was 1,261, of whom 32 were under 8 years of age. Mr. Downey was not happy with the type of patients being sent to him. A penny-pinching man, Downey did not want his institution littered with those "who have passed beyond the period of usefulness". He stressed that "the Ontario Hospital, Orillia, is not an infant's home nor an old men's nor old women's home" but rather "for the training and care of feeble-minded children and young men and young women". That is, he wanted only those feeble-minded people who either could work or could be trained to work in the institution to save employing workers who had to be paid. If there had to be fewer fully able people in the facility, then the least impaired (and unpaid) residents were to help look after the others, Downey suggested. He concealed the most severely handicapped residents in the upper reaches of the asylum and made no attempt to teach them or provide training for them.

By 1926, there were more demands for admission to the institution at Orillia than in the past, due in part to the increased use of new methods of testing in the schools. This testing resulted in more children with intellectual impairments being "discovered". Children whose I.Q. was judged to be 50 or higher were usually educated in auxiliary classes (in towns or cities where such classes existed); children with less ability were sent to Orillia, or one of the other provincial facilities. However, this demarcation by intelligence was blurred by many other factors. Children of the poor were more likely to end up in Orillia, as were girls of "poor moral character" and both boys and girls who were badly behaved.

When Mr. Downey died in 1926 the emphasis of the facility and the care given in it changed. From being a "business" it evolved into a teaching and research centre for professionals, and an enlarged and improved training school for the residents.

Under Dr. B. T. MacGhie, a social services department and a training school for nurses were added. Later, in the early 1930s, a new hospital complex, two cottages and a residence for nurses were completed. The old asylum gradually was taking on the cast of a more modern hospital.

In 1929 a probation scheme for girls from the Ontario Hospital, Orillia, began. Fifty-three girls went out from the hospital to work in the community in the first three years of the program. Some of the girls lived in the Orillia Colony House, which served as a half-way point between the freedom of the community and the restrictions of institutional life. A few of the girls progressed from Colony House to live with their employers in a form of bondage. The girls, who had been trained at

the hospital, did mainly domestic work in the community.

It is a commentary on the admission policy of the Orillia Hospital and on prevailing mores that at that time the majority of the girls in the probation program had been placed in the hospital because of "social" (mainly sexual) problems, added to some intellectual impairment.

The population of the Orillia Hospital continued to climb, to 2,021 in 1941, 2,290 by 1949. The overcrowded conditions were due not only to the fact that there had been no growth of the physical plant but also to an increasingly high demand on the institution. Many families, with the father away in the services during the war and the mother coping alone at home were no longer able to care for their handicapped children. It became a fact of life that not only were staff positions at Orillia often political appointments, but frequently places for residents were "found" only after political pressure was applied.

Despite continuing pressure for the admission of mentally retarded people, there was little growth of the physical plant at Orillia from the 1950s on. The Ontario Department of Health, recognizing that the institution at Orillia was becoming too big to be manageable, opened an extension for 400 women patients at Gravenhurst, some 40 miles north, in 1961. However, in 1962 a new laundry and trades building was opened in Orillia and in 1963 a dormitory was built to accommodate 300 children.

Pressures of various sorts were being put on the government to provide more and better services for mentally retarded people.

In 1964, a Federal-Provincial conference on mental retardation was held in Ottawa. The participants gave strong recognition to the need for community services for mentally retarded persons: a key point made was that "home and community care would appear to be most desirable for the majority of retardates". The parent movement begun in the 1950s became the spearhead for the development of these community services.

The parents' groups and such services as were already in the community were given further incentive as adverse reports about overcrowding conditions and inhumane treatment at the Orillia Hospital appeared in the press in the 1950s and 1960s.

The Ontario government, alarmed by public and political pressure, commissioned a study, *Present Arrangements for the Care and Supervision of Mentally Retarded Persons in Ontario*. The study, conducted by Walter B. Williston, Q.C., appeared in 1971.

This benchmark study not only set the tone throughout Ontario for the future care of persons with developmental handicaps but also changed the course

Marker on a numbered grave. Over 2,000 people were buried here between 1887 and 1971. (Photo by Stephen Dyck).

of destiny for the Orillia institution. Viewed in retrospect, certain of his statements and principles foresaw the future demise of the Huronia Regional Centre:

> Mentally retarded persons should be helped as far as possible in the context of their families, the communities in which they live or to which they will return, and the schools they attend. . . . If this is not possible, he should not be put into an institution which isolates him from his community.

Economic and political pressures opposing Williston's views were still strong in the 1970s, and the Huronia Regional Centre did not simply cease to exist.

Although the population of the centre gradually decreased, the adminstration tried to keep the centre itself open, alive and relatively adaptive to change. In the course of a century of existence, this large independent facility, in essence a small town with its own barber/hairdresser, plumber, carpenter and cook, and a day-care centre for the children of its employees, had taken on a life of its own. As late as 1987, two new buildings, one-storey brick structures, were built as homes for 20 people.

However, in 1989, it was announced that within 20 years the institution would no longer house mentally retarded people.

Some of the red brick Victorian buildings and the original stone farmhouse will be preserved on the grounds of the Huronia Regional Centre. Their architecture is significant in the history of Ontario. They will serve as a grim reminder of a period in our past when those who were different were feared, isolated, and incarcerated. ♦

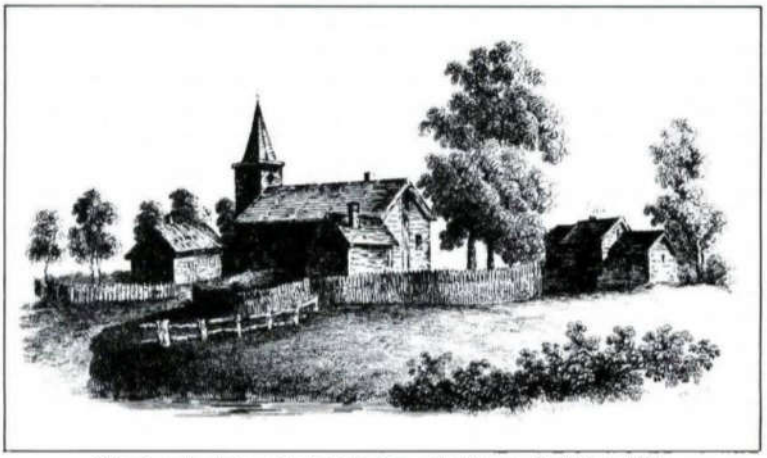
Joan Morris is a writer with a special interest in mental health issues. Virginia Hartley is Executive Director of the Barrie and District Association for People with Special Needs.

The Red River Crucible

By J.E. Rea

A SNUG LITTLE FLOCK
The Social Origins of the Riel Resistance, 1869-70

By Frits Pannekoek. Watson & Dwyer Publishing Ltd., Winnipeg, 1991. 276 pp., illus. $35.00 (cloth), $17.00 (paper).



Church and mission school at the Upper Settlement, Red River, 1822.

Frits Pannekoek has been writing this book a very long time. It began nearly twenty years ago as a doctoral dissertation wherein he laid the groundwork for challenging the conventional wisdom about the origins of the Red River Resistance led by Louis Riel. He developed and refined his interpretation over the years in a series of articles in which he flatly rejected the familiar arguments that the rising was a clash of civilized and primitive societies, that it was essentially a struggle over land or that it resulted from the injection of racial and religious struggles from Canada. All of these contentions, identified chiefly with George Stanley, A.S. and W.L. Morton, Irene Spry and, latterly, by Gerald Friesen, have in common the notion that the Métis resistance was precipitated by external factors. Rather, Pannekoek claims, the root cause was a sectarian and racial conflict whose origins lay deep in Red River's past.

It is an intriguing argument. The course of events in Red River can only be fully understood from within. Any perspective taken from Canada or London, or anywhere else for that matter, has led to the exclusion or failure to appreciate two critical factors, the ambivalence and confusion of the English-speaking mixed bloods and the destabilizing role of the Anglican clergy. This failure, the author charges, has been due primarily to the fact that other historians have neglected the rich resources of the archives of the Church of England. In one sense, then, this is very much an historian's book as Pannekoek attempts to make his case in opposition to most of his predecessors and colleagues. In another and broader sense, however, it is the most penetrating analysis of Red River society yet published. What is problematic is the final causal link, but more of that later.

To appreciate this analysis fully, one must be very clear on the demography of Red River and the social dynamics of a small, isolated community. From it origins as the Selkirk Settlement, the colony grew to a population of about 12,000 in 1871, the year of the first provincial census. By comparing this census profile with that of the Red River census of 1849, a remarkable stability is apparent. The total population more than doubled in the intervening twenty-two years, but the relative size of its major constituent groups remained constant. In both years, Protestants (meaning Anglicans and Presbyterians until the late 1860s) comprised 52% and Catholics 48% of the population. The number of Europeans (almost all English and Scots) grew from 500 (9%) to 1,600 (13%), swelled latterly by the influx of Canadians in the 1860s. Indians (most of whom were Protestants at St. Peter's) numbered just over 500 on both occasions, declining from 10% to 5% of the total, but they played little part in these events. The rest of the population were mixed bloods. The Half Breeds (which was a common, non-pejorative term at the time) were Protestant and English speaking and were one-third of the population at both dates and the Catholic Métis, most of whom spoke combinations of French, Cree or Michif, numbered just under half of the population of Red River. But this stability, according to the author, is valid only as an overview and therein lies the significant contribution of *A Snug Little Flock*.

These broad categories have been the groupings that most historians have employed in examining events in Red River and it is precisely because they have been seen as undifferentiated and homogeneous that Pannekoek has attacked the traditional interpretations that have followed from this misconception. One by one the author subjects them

to detailed analysis, examining their internal structure, their hopes and fears and aspirations, and finds continuing conflict both within and among the groups who made up Red River. But his particular attention is devoted to the Anglican clergy and the Half Breeds, whom he sees as the agents of discord. The first myth to be demolished is the notion that Red River in its formative years was a reasonably harmonious society that had worked out an acceptable accommodation between white and mixed blood, Catholic and Protestant, French and English, a sort of incipient bicultural success story.

Atop the social hierarchy of Red River were the Anglican clergy and the "commissioned gentlemen", the officers and retired officers of the Hudson's Bay Company. These clergymen, in Pannekoek's view, were a sorry lot: they were almost all from the lower middle class and would never have secured a benefice in England; indeed few of them would ever have been ordained there. Yet in Red River it was they who set the standard of behaviour, including a virulent anti-Catholicism, and their pretensions to pride of place were resented. What they sought was to recreate the rural society of England. But more disturbing, they preached against the debasement of British blood through marriage to natives. This inevitably brought them into collision with the officers and retired officers of the Company, many of whom had taken Indian or mixed-blood wives, either regularly or according to the "custom of the country". With the arrival of white women — clergy wives, and spouses and relatives of some of the officers, for the most part — the stage was set for the bane of small and isolated communities. To social malice was added racial prejudice, the whole made uglier by the incessant and corrosive gossip which never ceased to circulate and when focused on events such as the Foss-Pelly scandal, the trial of the Reverend Mr. Corbett for procuring an abortion or the Anglican/Presbyterian disputes over property and burying grounds, the result was a festering and politicized elite.

The effect of all this on the Half Breeds was what the jargon mongers now term an "identity crisis". Denied admission to the dominant group because of their native ancestry and divided from their Métis cousins by language and religion, they increasingly emphasized their British background and suppressed their Indian heritage. But they failed to develop any effective leadership and in the end were prepared to welcome incorporation into Canada as the only means of securing status.

Across the river in St. Boniface things were little better. The Catholic clergy were divided between the French-born Oblates who gathered around Bishop Taché at the cathedral and the French Canadian secular clergy who served the outlying parishes and followed the Métis on the semi-annual hunts. It was this latter group who became much closer to their congregations, serving as spiritual and temporal advisors. Taché, who was French Canadian *and* an Oblate, was often torn in his loyalties. Nor were the Métis themselves a coherent group. Many were *hivernants*, semi-nomads who wintered on the prairie; others were Company *engagés*, tripmen, labourers and boatmen, or herdsmen and part-time farmers and hunters. There were also among them some relatively prosperous farmers and merchants, like Louis Riel, *père*, Salomon Hamelin and Pascal Bréland. All these sub-groups had their own interests to serve. It is the essence of Pannekoek's thesis that in this swirling mix of racial and sectarian animosities lies the true explanation of the clash of 1869-70.

In this scenario the Canadians who began to arrive in numbers in the 1860s, equally disdainful of French, Catholic and Native, were merely catalysts. The community was already riven by "social warfare". But it is interesting, and perhaps appropriate, at this point to apply what historians refer to as "counterfactual analysis". What if those aggressive and provocative Canadians had not arrived at precisely that time? What if Canada had not concluded its successful bid to acquire Rupert's Land in 1869? What if the survey parties who were stopped by Riel, thus touching off the resistance, had not made their unsettling appearance that summer? Presumably, according to Pannekoek, Red River would have been obliged to resolve its own internal social difficulties. But would this necessarily have been a violent resolution? And who would lead?

The question of community leadership, it seems to me, is critical in proving out the author's contentions. To what extent had it changed by the end of the decade of the 1860s? According to Pannekoek's evidence, both explicit and implied, it had changed markedly. The Anglican clergy had thoroughly compromised their credibility and had little influence in the events of 69-70, especially with the Half Breeds. The authority of the Hudson's Bay Company was in severe decline as a result of the end of its trading monopoly and corporate reorganization at home. The other element of the old elite, the commissioned gentlemen, seem to have faded away; overborne, perhaps, by the new Canadians, but surely forced to share leadership with the merchants like McDermot, Bannatyne and newcomers such as Ashdown and others. (The author gives little attention, incidentally, to the entrepreneurial elite as such). Pannekoek emphasizes the failure of the Half Breeds to produce any effective leadership, largely because of their rejection by the former elite.

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That leaves Riel and the Métis. But even here there is no unanimity. The restraining hand of Taché was absent all that long winter and those Métis who took up arms were the most boisterous members of the community, the Company engagés who idled away the winter at Red River. Gabriel Dumont and the rest of the hunters stayed out on the prairie. Are we to assume from Pannekoek's argument that Riel and these Métis would have become the dominant element in the colony if there had been no intervention from outside? He does assert that there was no effective Protestant counter to Riel when the challenge came. And this is the nub of the historiographical debate.

It is Pannekoek's position that the Half Breeds rejected the Métis' use of force against the Crown (though Riel would and did claim that he never opposed the authority of the Crown, only an avaricious Canada). Given effective leadership, the author asserts, the Half Breeds would have opposed force with force. This implies a complete rupture between the two groups of mixed bloods. So he denies W.L. Morton's explanation that the Half Breeds, bound by blood to the Métis, gave Riel their support, however reluctantly. He rejects even more vigorously Irene Spry's contention that intermarriage drew the mixed bloods together, and on this his new research (and that of Douglas Sprague as the author acknowledges) seems conclusive as exogamy rates were very low. But Pannekoek is forced to concede that the Half Breeds were also concerned with defining the conditions of entry into Canada and surely, in the end, this is what Riel was seeking.

The Half Breeds not only participated in the conventions and meetings at Red River, two of their number, Thomas Bunn and James Ross, became, respectively, Secretary and Chief Justice of the Provisional Government. Their representatives approved the Lists of Rights and the dispatch of the negotiators to Canada. And despite the manipulations of Riel, Ritchot and Taché, they shared the general satisfaction and celebrations when news arrived in June 1870 that the Manitoba Act admitting the new province to Canada had been made law. It is difficult, therefore, to credit Pannekoek's claim that the two groups of mixed bloods were at daggers drawn. That they had grown apart can be rightly conceded.

Even if one is unable to accept the final links in Pannekoek's argument, the appearance of this study should be welcomed. Red River society has never been so thoroughly and superbly examined. The author has not won his historiographical debate, but his contribution must be acknowledged and reckoned with in all future studies of the birthplace of Western Canada.

J.E. Rea is Professor of History, University College, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg.

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  Wayne Kelly remembers the music-makers.

Don't miss the December/January issue of *The Beaver*!

A Crop of Broken Promises

By Boyce Richardson

LOST HARVESTS
Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy

By Sarah Carter. McGill-Queen's University Press, Toronto and Montreal, 1990. 323 pp., illus. $34.95.

I suppose most people who have looked into the matter would agree that the Indians of Western Canada were not treated fairly as the prairies were opened up to European settlement.

My knowledge is that of a layman, and therefore inexpert, but I am sure I was not alone in believing that the effort to turn Indians into farmers, enshrined in the treaties, was doomed because they were given the worst land, while the best land was reserved for the CPR or the incoming white settlers.

In one of many fascinating revelations contained in this superb and beautifully written study of Indian farming policy, Sarah Carter indicates that though the intention may have been to isolate the Indians on lands far from transportation and markets, it didn't really work out that way.

When the most likely areas for Indian reserves in Saskatchewan were being examined in the 1870s concern was expressed that Indian reserve lands "should not interfere with the possible requirements of future settlement, or of land for railway purposes." What happened was ironic. At the time, the fertile belt, believed capable of sustaining a vast population, was considered to run north-west along the Assiniboine and North Saskatchewan rivers and this was the route the CPR was expected to follow. Since the land further south was considered arid, and useless for agriculture, no objection was made to Indian reserves being located there.

In 1881, however, the CPR changed its mind and rerouted through the supposedly arid lands, so it turned out that with the development of dry-belt farming methods in the 1880s, the Indian reserves were not only located in areas as good as any other for farming, but were closer than the authorities originally wished to transportation.

Unfortunately this did not guarantee the success of the scheme. Sarah Carter's detailed examination of the record turns yet another common assumption on its head: Indians are generally supposed to have failed as farmers because they were predisposed by their conditioning as hunters and nomads to reject the idea of cultivating the earth. According to this view of history, a well-meaning and sympathetic government pressured the Indians towards adopting a more sedentary way of life, and even provided them with the tools to do so, but were stymied, as it were, by the Indians' obscurantist refusal to cooperate.

Not so, says Sarah Carter. In fact, the Indians, confronted with starvation conditions following the extermination of the great buffalo herds, wanted to become farmers, pressured the government for help, worked hard at cultivating their reserves, and in many places succeeded admirably, only to find their efforts negated by unsympathetic and paternalistic government policies. This is yet another shocking story about nineteenth-century Indian policy, which turns out to have been, if anything, even worse than we had supposed.

Sarah Carter is a research historian at the University of Winnipeg. I do not want to malign academics, but I must say that I do not expect from them the elegance of language and marvellous eloquence she achieves, especially in her opening chapters. I do not know of a better description anywhere than she gives us in her chapter entitled "Two Solitudes" of the Europeans' erroneous perceptions of Indians. She writes with beautifully controlled irony:

> Victorians, enormously proud of their railways, steamships and factories, were confident that during their lifetime man was reaching the pinnacle of the vast crusade to subdue nature. Reason and civilization were replacing the superstition and barbarism of the nomadic, predatory, precarious life of the past.

To people holding such views "the Indians' apparent ignorance of man's obligation to subdue the earth" was "a source of anguish," she observes, and adds:

> The Indians displayed no visible evidence of any degree of mastery over the environment; they appeared to be, not in control of, but at the mercy of natural forces . . . they left no marks of their presence on the land. Living by hunting, fishing and gathering, they were perceived as doing nothing to work and improve the

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land. . . . The buffalo hunting of the Plains Indians was perceived as an unhealthy enslavement to natural forces. Because their mobility, social cycle and material comfort were dependent on the buffalo's pattern of concentration and dispersal, the Plains Indians were viewed as "the most dependent among men", as "without buffalo they would be helpless, yet the whole nation did not own one".

Communist, indolent, primitive, indifferent to private property, the Indian had to be taught agriculture, according to this ideology, "to fix upon him the values of a permanent abode and the security of a margin of surplus," remarks Sarah Carter.

Her study focuses on a few Cree reserves established under Treaty Four mostly along the Qu'Appelle Valley, and in the Touchwood and File Hills north of Regina. She shows that from the beginning the Indians were subjected by penny-pinching, unsympathetic civil servants, at first led by Lawrence Vankoughnet, and later by the malevolent former military man, Hayter Reed, who once described the Battleford Indians as "the scum of the plains", and who regarded any expression of opinion by an Indian as evidence that they had become unmanageable, and should be taught a lesson.

Within two years of signing the treaty in 1874 the Indians were protesting that government had not fulfilled the promise to provide them with equipment and financial assistance in mastering agriculture. Two years later a new policy was adopted of creating so-called "home farms", something like model farms, which would serve as examples to reserve farmers. Farm instructors were hired in the East, but most of them had no knowledge of Indians, and some of them, little of farming. Europeans began commercial farming in the early 1880s using machinery; but the Indians were not permitted to have machinery, so that even if they succeeded in harvesting a crop, they were not able to get it ground into flour, and later they were denied authority to sell it. The home farms were abandoned within six years, having achieved nothing for the Indians, and those few instructors who had taken their educational function seriously quit in disgust.

In spite of these discouragements, by 1888 enough Indians were succeeding in agriculture as to raise the anger of European farmers at what they regarded as unfair competition. They were then subjected to an attempt to subdivide reserve lands in an effort by Reed to undermine the tribal system. The long-term objective was to turn the reserves into privately-owned lands, and to assimilate Indians into the general population. Ironically, this policy went hand-in-hand with others designed to keep the Indians separate: a pass system introduced as a temporary measure of control during the emergency of 1885, resulted in arbitrary arrests of many Indians simply for being off their reserve. (Though never legal, this system was still in use as late as the mid-thirties).

In spite of all this Indian farmers were able to win prizes at agricultural fairs, but these modest successes were set back by the severe drought from 1885-90. Nevertheless, in 1888 residents of Battleford complained to their member of Parliament that "Indians are raising so much grain and farm produce that they are taking away the market from the white settlers", so Reed assured them that his department "would do whatever it reasonably could to prevent the Indians from entering into competition with the settlers during the present hard time."

Reed eventually embarked on a policy of making Indians into peasant farmers, allowed to grow only enough for subsistence. Reserves were to be sub-divided between these so-called peasant farmers, and all surplus land sold, so that eventually there would be no bands, no reserves and no Department of Indian

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Affairs. Peasants, of course, were not expected to use machinery. And indeed, Reed required that Indians make their own tools by hand, and harvest their crops by hand, something that was virtually impossible.

Indians were then forbidden from selling their produce without a permit, being thereby excluded from agricultural markets. Carter has discovered that merchants permitted to buy Indian produce were required to pay some of the proceeds to the department, some to any companies with which the Indian vendor might have debts, and some to the farmer himself. This led to vociferous Indian protest, but to no avail. Many Indians who had become successful farmers, such as Louis O'Soup, of the Cowessess Reserve, gave up farming before the end of the century.

Along with all of these discouragements, the Indian Affairs administrators never lost sight of their objective to reduce the size of the reserves and in the first decade of this century a series of amendments to the Indian Act encouraged land surrenders on an immense scale. Carter documents that Indian protests were persistent during all these years. At no time, she writes "did the Indians adopt a policy of passive submission, disinterest or apathy."

By 1920, as is well-known, the condition of Indians throughout Canada reached a nadir. Sarah Carter's splendid work explains only too clearly how this happened. And it establishes once and for all, surely, the responsibility that rests on Canadians of the present generation to compensate these people for the mistaken, and sometimes cruel, policies of the past.

Boyce Richardson is an Ottawa film-maker and writer who takes a special interest in Indian history.

THE PACKET

Letters, Notes and Opinion

Buck Beavers & Biscuit Shooters

By Dave McIntosh

As you might expect, the largest number of meanings given for a single entry in the 1912 *Western Canadian Dictionary and Phrase-Book* is for drink: ball of fire, bottled earthquake, breakey-leg, forty-rod lightning, stingo, tanglefoot, etc. etc.

The 52-page red-covered dictionary claimed on its title page to be the "first dictionary ever printed in Canada". The boast may not be exaggerated by much. There were earlier dictionaries of Indian and Inuit dialects, assembled chiefly by missionaries, and a *Dictionnaire Canadien-Français* by Sylva Clapin was published in 1894. The 1985 *Canadian Encyclopedia* gives 1937 as the earliest date for a Canadian dictionary, and it was mostly American with a few Canadian additions.

The Winnipeg-published 1912 dictionary set out its aims unshyly on the cover: "A Guide for the Globe-Trotter, the Tourist, the Newcomer and the Settler Explaining, in Plain English, the Meaning of the Most Popular Canadianisms, Colloquialisms and Slang, added to which is a Wide Selection of Items of a Cyclopaedic Character Immediately Helpful to the Stranger. The Picturesque Language of the Wild and Woolly West, Speech of the City, the Saloon, the Trail, the Gold Mine, and the Lumber Camp."

All that on the cover, and there was still plenty of room for the name of the editor, John Sandilands, the publisher, Telegram Job Printers Limited, and the price, 25 cents. The back cover carried a map showing how to get to the publisher's office (56 Adelaide Street) in downtown Winnipeg.

Sandilands also claimed that his dictionary was the first anywhere to include a table of contents. And so it does, of a sort. For example: "Men who should not come to Canada — see Cold Feet" and "When the Canadian's bluffing himself — see Effete East." We look and here is what we find: "Effete East, a hackneyed phrase meaning 'the worn-out, exhausted Eastern Provinces'. But the Westerner who jokingly refers to the East in this fashion seldom means it: he has a warm corner in his heart for some well-remembered spot 'way back in Ontario or in the Maritime Provinces."

So Sandilands was not only a lexicographer; he was also a philosopher — and perhaps an advance man for modern federalism.

The Sandilands text can also be much more entertaining than a modern dictionary. For instance, my *Concise Oxford* gives for "teetotal": "of or advocating total abstinence from intoxicants". Sandilands' ver-

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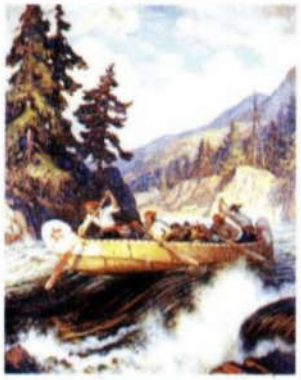
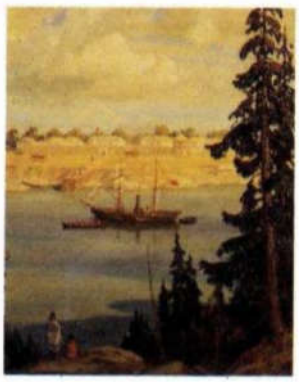
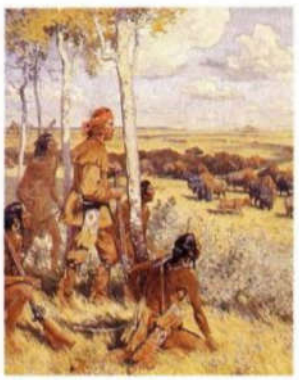


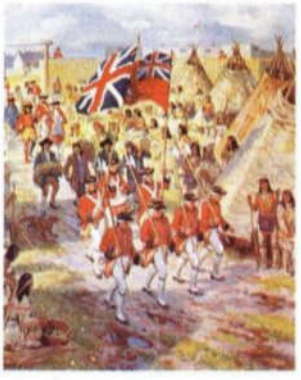
A. *Chief Trader Archibald McDonald Descending the Fraser*
By A. Sherriff Scott.



B. *S.S. "Beaver" Off Fort Victoria*
By A. Sherriff Scott.



C. *Kelsey Sees the Buffalo*
By C.W. Jefferys.



D. *Trading Ceremony at York Factory*
By A. Sherriff Scott.

E. *R.M. Ballantyne and Chief Trader George Barnston at Tadoussac, 1846*
By Charles Comfort.

F. *Battle in the Bay, 1697*
By Norman Wilkinson.

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sion: "About the beginning of the last century a temperance society at Hector, New York, pledged themselves to abstain from distilled spirits only, but ten years later another pledge bound all signers to total abstinence, the two classes being distinguished by the initials O.P. (old pledge) and T. (total)."

It is interesting today to spot words in a 1912 dictionary you don't find in current lexicons or whose meanings have changed. For instance, "gay" in 1912 meant quarrelsome or overbearing. Here are more examples taken from my rare copy of Sandilands' pioneer work:

Adanac — Canada spelled backwards and frequently used as a name for hotels, clubs and manufactured products.

Agent — railway official in charge of a smaller station; can graduate to stationmaster as (or if) the town develops.

Alienation — mental derangement.

Bagman (or Drummer) — commercial traveller or salesman.

Basket social — church or school picnic.

Beaver — a roadmaker near lumber camps. The foreman is the buck beaver. The foreman in a lumber camp is a bunter, or push.

Biscuit shooter — waitress.

Boodler — a person after the boodle, or money, as in politics.

Canned Music — player pianos, gramophones, music boxes, etc.

Cat's light — dusk or twilight.

Chairwoman — in disuse as chairman covers both.

Chestnut bell — a tiny bell hung beneath the coat lapel and tinkled by the wearer on hearing a stale joke.

Christy stiff — a hard felt hat.

Cobalting — promoting doubtful money-making schemes (after Cobalt, Ont.)

Cow — milk or cream, as in "pass the cow".

Devil-dodger — or sky pilot, a parson.

Dodgers — small handbills distributed on the street, so named from passers-by trying to dodge them.

Dog's nose — a mixture of beer and gin.

Improved Britisher — person born in the Old Country but long resident in Canada.

Plunk — a dollar; also simoleon.

Porkopolis — Chicago.

Dave McIntosh worked for Canadian Press from 1946 to 1972 and is the author of seven books. He lives in Ottawa and is working on books eight and nine.

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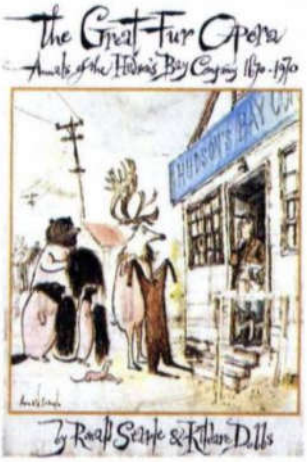

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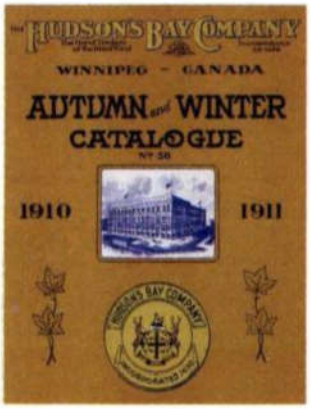

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The Simcoes in Upper Canada

On reading the review, Toronto of Old, by Peter Carver, [*The Beaver*, February/March 1991] I was surprised to see that Mr. Carver stated "It is the first year of the nineteenth century . . .", and, "Thus, justice in the town of York in the year 1800."

I have always been under the impression that the first year of Our Lord was the year one. Not the year zero. As a century is one hundred years, the last year of the first century must have been the year 100. The first year of the second century, therefore, was the year one hundred and one, (101). Continuing, the year 1800 must have been the last year of the eighteenth century. The *first* year of the nineteenth century was eighteen hundred *and one*, (1801).

Mr. Carver goes on to say, "Due respect is paid to the founder of York, John Graves Simcoe, who arrived with his wife and three young children in 1793. It was Simcoe who ordered the seat of government moved from Kingston, ..." Also, "And it was Elizabeth Simcoe who . . . recorded . . . the three years she and her husband spent in the colony."

I find these statements somewhat at variance with my history books, *Governor Simcoe and his Lady*, by Marcus Van Steen, *Mrs. Simcoe's Diary*, edited by Mary Quayle Innis, and *Upper Canada, 1784-1841* by Gerald M. Craig.

Col. and Mrs. Simcoe entered Upper Canada on 30 June 1792. Col. Simcoe took the oath of office on 8 July at the Church of St. George, Kingston, and met with his Executive-Council in Kingston a week later. However, Governor Simcoe did not establish his capital there. He and his party sailed to a small settlement at the mouth of the Niagara River, which Simcoe then named Newark, on 26 July 1792. The first Parliament, or Legislative Assembly, met for the first time at Newark, on 17 September 1792. The Assembly also met at Newark in 1793, in 1794, 1795, and in 1796.

The Simcoes stayed in Upper Canada until the Governor obtained a leave of absence, due to ill health. They then left the colony of Upper Canada on 26 July 1796. According to my arithmetic that made the Simcoes' stay in the colony just over four years. Not three.

G. S. Drysdale,
Carleton Place, Ontario

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No Latinist

J.M. Bumsted's article on the 1950s cultural-identity ferment made interesting reading. [*The Beaver*, February/March 1991]. The author is not responsible for two errors in the illustrations accompanying the article.

A picture caption suggests Lorne Greene played Othello at Stratford, but he never did. The production shown was done for CBC Television. The error arose because in the period 1952 to 1968, as the *Oxford Companion to Canadian Theatre* states under "Television drama in English", television drama featured "a new generation of Canadian actors who worked with the Stratford Festival in the summer and with the CBC in the winter", of whom Greene was one.

A boxed quotation of a lyric from the musical *My Fur Lady*, perpetuates an error of the original and manages to compound it. The lyric draws on the saying "Mens sana in corpore sano" ("A healthy mind in a healthy body") by the poet Juvenal. To rhyme with "Canadiana" the lyricists committed a mistake in gender-agreement; but *The Beaver* seems to have dropped the line of type on the floor and reassembled it in Swahili.

John Beckwith,
Toronto, Ontario

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Who killed the Golden Age of Sail?

Historians of Atlantic Canada have agreed with proud citizens and statesmen of the region: there was a Golden Age in Atlantic Canada, and it came and went with the days of sail. Almost as often, they have identified the same culprit as the killer of the Golden Age: Confederation. At Confederation, the Maritimes were as rich as any part of British America, and many Maritimers were reluctant to join their Canadian cousins. After Confederation, as they declined to the status of poor relations, Maritimers frequently put the blame squarely at the feet of John A. Macdonald.

Not only Maritimers have found it easy to link Confederation and regional decline. "The shades of night were falling, and the night was called Confederation," wrote Stephen Leacock (an economist when he was not writing humour) about the end of Maritime prosperity in the days of sail. Many arrogant Canadians have had the same message put to them more bluntly for attempting to condescend to the Maritime provinces.

Twenty years ago, a team of historians at Memorial University of St. John's, Newfoundland, began to explore that Golden Age of Sail and its decline. Finally, in 1990, their student and successor Eric Sager (along with Gerald Panting, one of the project's founders) summed up two decades of research in a book called *Maritime Capital*. The explanations *Maritime Capital* gives for the death of the Golden Age of Sail, it turns out, are not the ones we may have been expecting.

"*Maritime Capital* is anti-romantic history," says Eric Sager now. "The fact is, the Maritimers dismantled their shipping industry themselves, and the question is — Why?"

In 1971, when Sager was still a student in his home province of British Columbia, Memorial University historians David Alexander, Keith Matthews, and Gerry Panting decided that Newfoundland's only university should be more active in the seafaring history of its region, and they started the Maritime History Group. Of the three founders, it seems generally agreed that Matthews was the archivist, Panting (for all his scholarly contributions) the administrator, and Alexander the driving intellect.

The Group's first coup came when Britain's Public Record Office proposed to discard a vast collection of ship and crew registers, simply for lack of space to keep them. Keith Matthews organized the campaign that saved the papers and brought them to Memorial. "The Maritime History Archives is 80% of all the crew agreements for all the shipping of the British Empire from 1860 to 1950," explains Sager, "and that makes it one of the main shipping archives in the world." Today it draws not only historians of Atlantic Canada but anyone concerned with the history of British sailing when Britannia ruled the waves.

When Matthews created the archives, David Alexander conceived an ambitious research project. By then in his thirties, with studies of the Renaissance and the Industrial Revolution behind him, Alexander had adopted Newfoundland as his home and subject. "He was a lover of small places that could escape the homogenizing tendencies of the modern world," says Sager. "David cared deeply about Newfoundland, thought deeply about it. He worried about the survival of Newfoundland and the fishery — and nothing that has happened to it in recent years, with the collapse of the fishery, would have surprised him at all. Not at all."

Alexander and his colleagues proposed to use computers to organize and study the records that Matthews had assembled at Memorial. It was no small task. Their Atlantic Canada Shipping Project team grew to fifteen people, and they needed $750,000 from what became the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. "We computerized the records as they related to eight ports in Atlantic Canada," explains Gerry Panting. "Fortunately the ships each had a registry number, and we could link crew records to registry numbers. So we assembled a computerized data base that allowed us to study a vast number of people and ships." It took four years to encode the data for eight Canadian ports. "Our archives has the same records for all the British ports," says Panting. "Imagine the task of doing Liverpool or London!"

It was in the 1970s that collaborative, computerized — and expensive — historical research projects like the Shipping Project became a familiar part of the Canadian academic landscape. Wherever the amount of data is huge, historians have formed research teams and turned to computers. Since then,

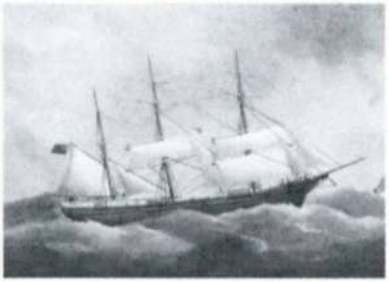
several such projects have spent much of their time struggling to make historical data and computer systems cooperate. A few seem to have succeeded only to spew out vast quantities of apparently meaningless information.

The Shipping Project avoided both those problems. David Alexander was its computer expert, according to Gerry Panting, and "that went fairly smoothly. I don't mean we had no problems, and once we did have to retrace our steps and revise our procedures, but on the whole it went well." Alexander also mastered the political and economic theory needed to ensure that the Project gave new insights into Atlantic Canada's economic woes. "David understood that it might tell us important things about the economy of Atlantic Canada in relation to Canada and to North America," says Sager. "There were other questions, of course, but David saw that issue of development and regional economy as being central."

Then, early in the 1980s, first David Alexander and then Keith Matthews died. Both men were in their early forties. Their deaths were a great loss to Newfoundland history — and a staggering blow to the Shipping Project, which was just getting through the stage of data entry. It fell to Panting and younger scholars to carry the work through and to draw the conclusions. In the end, Eric Sager, who joined the Project as a research associate in 1976, became the principal author of the book that had always been seen as the Project's summation.

The data emerging from the Shipping Project's computer banks was elaborately technical. "We talked of correlation coefficients and regression equations," Sager has written, "but I make no apology for that. If you want to understand entire fleets of ships and the shape of a great industry, you simply have to look at the numbers."

The numbers, in fact, amply justified Atlantic Canada's pride in the achievements of its sailing fleet. Around 1880 Canada had the fourth largest merchant fleet in the world, and three-quarters of it was built and owned in Atlantic Canada. Thousands of Maritimers worked at sea and thousands more in shipyards. Any of 9,000 Canadian vessels might have inspired the famous comment of a British sailor who watched a black-hulled, three-masted Nova Scotian race by in the South Atlantic with all sails set: "There she goes, a ramping, stamping, hard-driving Bluenose — wooden ships with iron men to sail them."



By the 1880s Atlantic Canada's ships and sailors went everywhere and carried everything. Saint John's *Marco Polo* set speed records carrying wool from Australia, and *Maritime Capital* charts Maritime ships hauling cotton from New Orleans, guano from Peru, rice from India, molasses from Cuba, and petroleum from New York, as well as Canadian timber. "The merchants of Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, a place with 4,000 people, ran a global business in the mid-nineteenth century," observes Sager. "They had to deal with freight rates in Japan, the ship market in London, the international demand for cotton — and with the telegraph they kept on top of it all. It certainly destroys the myth of Maritime parochialism — that these were small people hidden away in their outports."

But, Sager cautions, it is too easy to find romance in these figures, too easy to forget that the "iron" men were vulnerable flesh and bone. "The Golden Age idea glosses over the reality that this was almost the most dangerous industry around, that it killed people, that there was extraordinary exploitation of labour, that timber ships sailed off in winter so overloaded that they fell apart." Pay was low, masters were harsh, and a sailor had about one chance in 100 of dying in any given voyage — poor odds for a lifetime career.

Still, in its heyday it was a remarkable global industry, one that Atlantic Canada built with local materials, local skills, local enterprise, and local capital. Then it vanished. The lifetime of a wooden ship was barely a decade. When the building stopped, the fleet soon followed. "Wood, wind, and sail" gave way to ships of iron and steam, and those modern ships were built and owned elsewhere. The Shipping Project's numbers show that in the three decades after 1880, the Canadian fleet shrank by two-thirds, and Canada has been a minor player in world shipping ever since. What happened to Atlantic Canada's shipping industry?

The conclusion of the Atlantic Canada Shipping Project is that the shipowners of Atlantic Canada chose to let their industry die.

Sager and Panting describe the shipowners as merchants above all, looking to "buy cheap and sell dear," rather than committed manufacturers. When ships were cheap and easy to build, they built them. But when railways came along, they looked away from the ocean to the land. *Maritime Capital* carries a message that may not appeal to proud Maritimers: Atlantic Canadian merchant-shipowners joined in the same landward, continental trend that drove the CPR to Vancouver and built a transcontinental nation.

Many Maritimers, of course, opposed Confederation fiercely, but Sager doubts they did so to preserve their ocean shipping fleet. "We had some researchers go through the

Maritimes newspapers for 1867, and there was just nothing about shipping," says Sager. "No one was arguing for staying out of Confederation to maintain a global shipping orientation instead."

Maritime Capital seems to say that the glorious sailing fleet carried Atlantic Canada to a dead end. "What wooden shipbuilding really does is allow a pre-industrial social system to continue," says Sager. "The people who built ships and sailed them lived on small family farms. They did not work for wages. They went back and forth from ships to farming, in a very pre-industrial way of living." There was little industrial spinoff from the wooden ships, no workshops that would turn to other products.

Could Canada have built a modern fleet of iron steamships? The Shipping Project showed that every nation that did so had specific national policies and massive state subsidies. "I made a list of all the essential conditions various countries had to have in order to develop a shipbuilding industry in iron steamships, and Atlantic Canada had none of them," says Sager. Since the Maritime shipowners themselves hardly promoted iron shipbuilding, it was unlikely that Ottawa would. Sager is convinced there is no point searching for "villains and scapegoats" in Ottawa.

The Atlantic Canada Shipping Project, however, was never designed to let "Central" Canada off the hook. Long before the Project's work was done, David Alexander wrote that the shipping industry's causes lay outside Altantic Canada and Atlantic Canada could not be blamed for its decline. In his essays, he emphasized both regional prosperity and the recovery of what he called "national self-respect" for Canada. He was pessimistic about both. The sailing fleet may have been doomed, like many Canadian industries that have come and gone, but both the region and the nation should be learning how to build more stable alternatives — not fighting over the blame.

Maritime Capital makes no plea that Atlantic Canada's Golden Age of Sail could or should have been saved. It is, as Eric Sager says, antiromantic history, with no easy answers or obvious villains. Its close technical exploration mostly underlines that regional prosperity or poverty have complicated causes — and that the way ahead to a better future is rarely clear. Ideas can be painful, Sager admits — "but history should be painful sometimes. It should stimulate criticism and awareness of the realities of a situation."

I asked Eric Sager how he thinks the message of *Maritime Capital* will be received in Atlantic Canada. He was not sure. There have been enthusiastic reviews, "but I am not sure they really grasped that message. It is a problem with scholarly history, that the message is not expressed in a way that tends to be picked up generally. That's why I always thought the other outcome of the Shipping Project should be a popular history, but it hasn't come along yet."

The economic future of Atlantic Canada — and all of Canada, for that matter — may remain perplexed, but the spinoff benefits of the historical enterprise that Panting, Matthews, and Alexander created in 1971 are now undeniable. Some of the best historical work in Canada today is being done by East Coast scholars, and the Maritime History Group played a notable role in that. "Even in the doldrums, I was not disheartened," says Gerry Panting. "We trained a lot of people who have done a lot of history. And perhaps another Keith Matthews, another David Alexander will come along. They were very unusual people, but you never can tell." ♦

"Maritime Capital: The Shipping Industry in Atlantic Canada 1820-1914" *by Eric W. Sager with Gerald E. Panting was published by McGill-Queen's Press in 1990. This June it was named runner-up for the Canadian Historical Association's best-history-of-the-year prize. The winner was* ***"The Gender of Breadwinners"*** *by Joy Parr, who was profiled in this series in the June/July issue of "The Beaver".*

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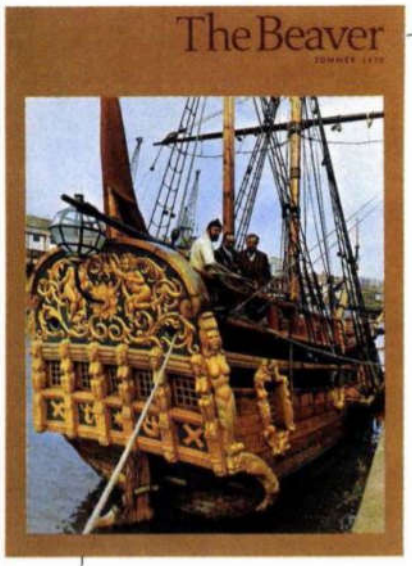

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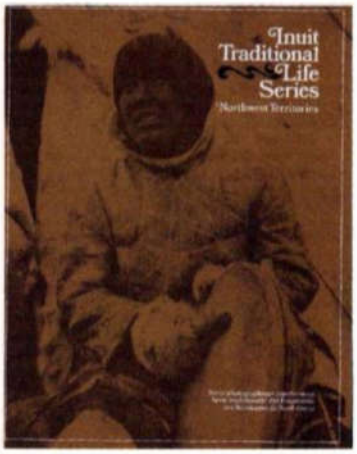

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